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COMMITTEE
QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

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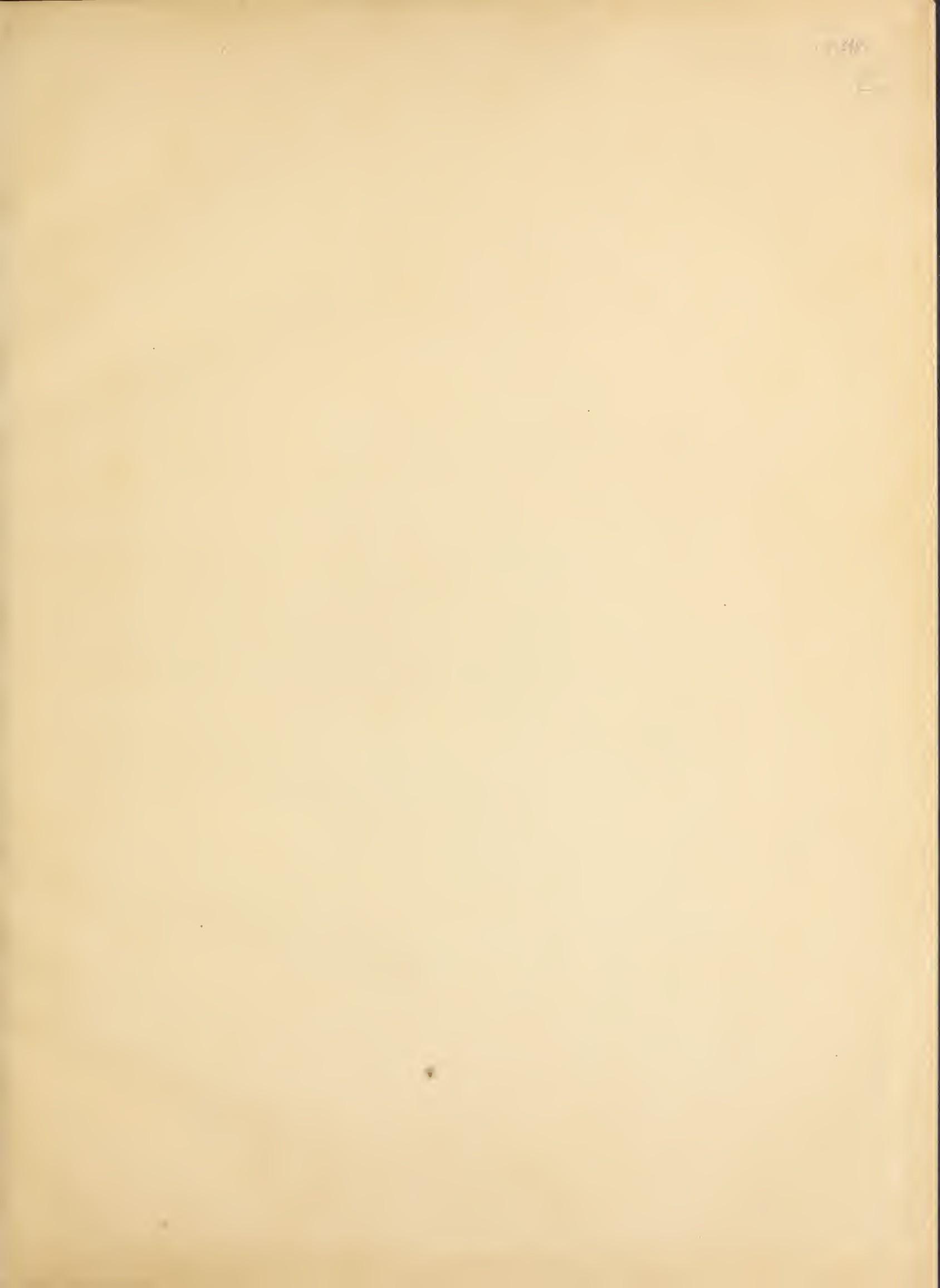


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DEVELOPMENT
of the
QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

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JAMAICA CIVIC CENTRE COMMITTEE
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Consulting Engineer

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The "Development of the Civic Centre for the Borough of Queens" as advocated by the Jamaica Civic Centre Committee represents no mere individual sponsorship but the cooperation of a large body of responsible citizens representing the Engineering and Legal professions, Banking, Retailing and Merchandising, Realtors, and the Civic Interests of the community, comprising public opinion.



Foreword

▼

WILLIAM H. HASTINGS,
Chairman, Jamaica Civic Centre Committee.

*I*t is the purpose of the Jamaica Civic Centre Committee to confine its presentations to facts. On this basis of irrefutable logic it is readily indicated that Jamaica is the present centre of activity in Queens County from any angle of analysis, and therefore is the preferable locale for a group of public buildings to serve the entire county. Sites for such buildings are available in Jamaica and meet every requirement of modern city planning from utilitarian and aesthetic standards.

The location of a civic centre is primarily a question of city plan engineering, involving economy of operation and maximum use-convenience value. It is the considered opinion of the committee that the engineer's report, submitted in behalf of Jamaica in 1931 and subsequently considered by the then existing City Plan Commission of New York and by the Engineer of the Board of Estimate, be adopted as the report of this committee, with such modifications as are now included to conform with developments to date, including the Normal School site. Your committee is impressed with the favorable reaction of the Board of Estimate Engineer in the Report to the present Board of Estimate on January 26, 1934 in which the claims of Jamaica are admitted.

The engineer's revised report is herewith submitted as the report of this committee, supplemented by a general report from the chairman of the Committee on Procedure.



R E P O R T

by

GEORGE H. BRUNS

Consulting Engineer

Jamaica Civic Centre Committee

GENERAL STATEMENT

The principle of intelligent planning for present use and future needs is unassailable. In a well considered civic centre plan the economic advantages of proper location and maximum convenience are not incompatible with the aesthetic values attained. Neither phase should be subordinate to the other in the ideal arrangement. Public buildings must serve a definite purpose in their placement and design but it is equally to be desired that beautiful, impressive buildings in an effective setting reflect the dignity and prestige of local government.

To conduct the public business in dilapidated structures ill-adapted to the purpose is to violate the self respect of the people. To maintain those buildings in widely scattered locations with no coherent plan is to impose on the people inconvenience that becomes actual nuisance. To continue to occupy inadequate rented quarters in the absence of publicly owned buildings is to endure an expensive and unsatisfactory make-shift.

City planning seeks to attain the highest aesthetic standards incident to maximum practical values. Mere monumentalism is not the object of the city plan engineer but beauty of design and grouping consistent with utility. This will be apparent on disclosure of the plans for grouping public buildings in Jamaica to comprise the Queens Civic Centre.

The various public buildings of the more congested and territorially restricted boroughs of the City of New York were located many years ago with no conception of the future growth and development of the city. The opportunity for correcting this condition has long passed in those boroughs. In the Borough of Manhattan for example, tremendous sums were expended in recent years in expanding the area about the City Hall to accommodate modern buildings urgently needed for public service.

The Borough of Queens is in a more favorable position to provide for immediate and future needs. That Queens is able at this late date to secure a civic centre site within Jamaica is a fortunate circumstance for the borough since it obviates all risk as to future trends in the environment of the civic centre.

Locations outside of Jamaica have been submitted. It is the usual experience when public buildings are consolidated in a relocation plan for various sections to urge their

particular locality. This is commendable local pride and in arriving at a decision the following cardinal principles may be employed:

1. Where long custom and convenience have created a characteristic environment in a broad community such environment must be maintained; since it is the purpose of a civic centre to respond to a public need and not to attempt to divert established trends of growth and custom.

2. There must be no great disparity between the value of the site for the civic centre and the value of the buildings; the term value being used in its broadest sense and not in the restricted sense of expenditure involved in the acquisition of a site.

A Jamaica location is indicated in the application of these two principles. The location of public buildings in Jamaica over a long period of years has resulted in the accumulation there of many quasi-public and private buildings. This is not duplicated in any other section of the borough. Thus a very definite if heterogeneous civic centre is comprised in Jamaica at present.

Due to lack of planning and the obsolete construction of the public buildings now in Jamaica, and the prevalent use of rented quarters to accommodate public offices and courts, modern economy and convenience as well as dignity and coherence is lacking. It cannot be gainsaid, however, that Jamaica is predominantly a community of public service buildings encircled by a large residential community and accessible from all parts of the borough by highway and transportation systems which naturally considered this populous area in establishing their routes.

The outstanding characteristic of the community is that of a natural civic centre. During the past decade new federal, state, city and borough offices have continuously augmented the aggregation of old established public offices long located in Jamaica. The County Clerk Building and the Register Building define Jamaica as the County seat. The location of the recently erected public buildings, of which the Children's Court, the State Armory and the General Post Office are typical, is evidence of the trend toward Jamaica. This is increasingly important when it is realized that these recently completed edifices are fixed in a Jamaica location and will not be obsolete for many years to come.

When a site which meets the requirements of city planning standards is available within a community of established character it is evident that sites located within undeveloped areas must be disregarded in making a selection. Consideration of any other site emphasizes the advantage of locating the Queens Civic Centre in Jamaica in accordance with the plans submitted. Permanent protection of the site by its circumferential environment is thus assured.

Aside from the particular merits of the plans for the Civic Centre in Jamaica it will be observed that this procedure involves no removal of public buildings from Jamaica since these will be relocated within the same community. Thereby the established character of Jamaica is preserved, as is desirable, and every phase of economy, convenience, dignity and beauty that may be claimed for a well planned civic centre is amply assured.

Long Island City is an illustration of the converse result of ignoring the principles previously indicated as applicable. Here indeed every evidence of the future character of that community was ignored when important public offices were located there. The effect of these locations on the growth and character of Long Island City has been entirely without result. Long Island City by its location on Newtown Creek, the busiest waterway in the world, its access to the East River, and principally because of its tremendous railroad yards and trackage was destined to be the great industrial section of Queens. Land and water borne traffic facilities have increased that characteristic development of factories and warehouses. Manufacturing of every kind is carried on in Long Island City. Great loft buildings and factories now surround the public buildings which with their antiquated construction are virtually useless today. The Borough offices are housed in one of these industrial buildings adjacent to the railroad right of way.

Removal of the public offices from Long Island City is imperative.

The Queens Civic Centre may be erected in Jamaica without delay as no fill is required and no foundation problems will be encountered in either location. Grading is a negligible item and street surfacing is minimized by the presence of existing streets. Sewers and water mains are in place and electric service established.

In recommending that the Queens Civic Centre be erected in Jamaica and in the preliminary designs for a civic centre on the respective sites provided in Jamaica I have been governed by the following requirements:

1. Conditions in the Borough of Queens have reached a stage where economy and a decent regard for propriety in conducting the business of the courts and public offices demand that the activities of local government be accommodated in suitable buildings owned by the City of New York.

2. The location and arrangement employed in meeting this demand must be consistent with the traditions of the Borough of Queens.

3. The specific design developed for the Queens Civic Centre, and its location with respect to the whole borough, must provide the fullest measure of convenience.

4. Local interests must be secondary and the civic centre location and design viewed from a proper perspective in their true relation to the *established* character of the whole community.

5. The completion of the civic centre must provide a more definite expression of the Borough of Queens as a civic entity. The practice of referring to the various sections of Queens by the old town names which were in existence prior to consolidation with the City of New York in 1898, such as Elmhurst, Flushing, Jamaica, Long Island City and many others, has had an adverse influence on many borough wide undertakings and has undoubtedly confused the civic centre project as an opportunity to secure a *local* improvement. The civic centre must be viewed as a borough project divorced from merely local considerations.

After the lapse of more than three years since my original report was submitted I am unable to find any cause for modifying these statements. Much that was anticipated in my original report of March 23, 1931 submitted in a personal appearance before the

then existent City Planning Commission of the City of New York has since transpired. Notable in this respect is the completion of the subway system connecting Jamaica with various communities of Queens and the Borough of Manhattan, except for track installation and station finish. Completion of the General Post Office Building, progress in erecting the State Armory to perhaps within six months of completion, and the further addition of various modern commercial buildings in Jamaica have also occurred in the interim. Completion of Grand Central Parkway through Jamaica and progress in extending Hillside Avenue to the Nassau County line are other items anticipated and now generally accomplished.

At this time I am able to offer more carefully prepared drawings illustrating my conception of a civic centre in Jamaica as it will appear when completed. With the exception of minor details the plan for the development of the Hillside Avenue site conforms with the design originally proposed. In order to meet the condition that the site for a civic centre be city owned, which has been advanced recently, an additional Jamaica site is submitted in this report. This site was not proposed at the time of my original report and probably was not available then. Its discontinuance as a Normal School site under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education suggests its consideration as a civic centre site restricted to city owned property. The alternative sites in Jamaica require a different concept and treatment in their respective designs.

In reviewing my recommendations for locating the Queens Civic Centre in Jamaica and the arrangements employed in the development of the Jamaica sites the following determining factors are again indicated:

1. The completion of the borough centre as proposed will provide a more adequate expression of the borough as a civic entity.
2. The public business will be transacted with efficiency and decorum. Extreme as is the need of the administrative departments of the borough government it is even more imperative that immediate provisions be made to accommodate the courts, including the Supreme Court, and the county offices now housed in quarters wholly inadequate to their need and unsuited in every way to their purpose.

The Jamaica sites and the designs proposed for grouping the buildings within the respective areas will provide accommodations for all city, county, borough and judicial offices and courts. Future needs have been allowed but in the absence of accurate information as to the disposition of floor space required it has been deemed inadvisable to attempt dimensioned details at this time. It is quite probable that the areas indicated in the drawings accompanying this report exceed the actual requirements of the present or future. This may be accurately determined for the preparation of contract plans. The following advantages will not be affected by any change in relative and minor details.

1. *Low Cost*

The Normal School site presumably may be acquired, without expenditure of funds, as city owned property.

The Hillside Avenue site can be acquired at a reasonable cost based on the indicated assessment values for 1933 and the absence of any expensive

buildings or good-will incident to any established business. The inclusion of the centrally disposed city park, which will be continued as a park, and Hillside Avenue frontage now owned by the city or on which easements to the city exist further reduces the cost of acquiring this site.

2. *Convenience of Inter-centre placement*

The various departments and courts having common business will be conveniently located with reference to each other so that public business can be carried on with the maximum of efficiency and ease.

3. *Economy of building*

The centralization of the various functions of local government in one group of buildings tends toward a lower cost of construction than would be possible with the erection of separate buildings at scattered locations.

4. *Economy of Administration and Operation*

Administration and control will be more direct and efficient in a closely knit organization than in different buildings widely separated. Likewise the cost of operation and maintenance will be less costly and more efficient. The use of a central heating plant is an example.

5. *Expresses Importance of Local Government*

In a group of public buildings effectively located and designed the civic life of the borough will be exemplified and the local government will find adequate and proper expression of its responsibilities.

6. *A Logical Location in Harmony with the whole program of Growth and Improvement*

The locations developed in accordance with the plans proposed will serve as an harmonious link between all parts of the territory concerned and will form a vital part in harmony with the whole program of growth and improvement from all directions which is indicated by the trend over many years.

The statements made in this general discussion should clearly indicate that a civic centre need not be, and indeed by virtue of its purpose should not be, devoid of those advantages of accessibility and those conveniences of practicality which commend themselves to the tax paying citizen.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

*Office of the Chief Engineer
Board of Estimate and Apportionment*

Report No. 49953.

T-145

January 13, 1934.

Hon. FIORELLO H. LAGUARDIA, Mayor, Chairman, Board of Estimate and Apportionment:

Sir—At the meeting of the Committee of the Whole held on October 7, 1930 (Cal. No. G-1), there was referred to the Department of City Planning a communication from the President of the Borough of Queens suggesting that a public hearing be held in order that the various civic associations and taxpayers of the Borough might be given an opportunity to be heard in the matter of the selection of a site for a civic centre in the Borough of Queens. On February 1, 1933, at the time the City Planning Department was abolished, this matter was assigned to the Chief Engineer of the Board. The President of the Borough of Queens has recently informally urged that a report be prepared concerning the selection of a site for a civic centre in order that an application may be made to the Federal government for funds to finance the project.

On March 23, 1931, the Commissioner of City Planning gave an informal hearing to interested property owners at which there were a number of appearances. In addition the Borough President and a number of civic organizations, property owners' associations and individual property owners have submitted for consideration various sites. These sites, their approximate area and assessed valuation for the year 1933 are designated as follows and their general location is shown on the accompanying map:

	Approximate Area.	Approximate Assessed Valuation.		
		Land.	Buildings.	Total.
Long Island City site	7 acres	\$625,000 00	\$195,000 00	\$820,000 00
Thomson Hill site	24 acres	690,000 00	195,000 00	885,000 00
Juniper Valley site	175 acres	1,629,000 00	3,492,000 00	5,121,000 00
Elmhurst site	30 acres	680,000 00	17,000 00	697,000 00
Kew Gardens site	8 acres	500,000 00	500,000 00
Jamaica site	17 acres	525,000 00	143,000 00	668,000 00
Parental Home site	38 acres	190,000 00	190,000 00

These areas and assessed valuations can only be considered in general as rough approximations. Streets within the limits of the respective sites are included within the areas given. Any necessary modifications in the street plan to render some of the sites adaptable for the proposed use would affect the areas and the valuations.

Arguments have been presented in favor of the selection of each site by parties interested in the particular locality in which the respective sites are advocated. The selection of a site has become extremely controversial. In my judgment, however, the selection should not be involved in community controversies. The civic centre for the Borough should be designed to endure for all time to come. Major consideration should, therefore, be given to the ultimate growth of the Borough and to future adaptability.

As the civic centre would serve primarily to house the Borough offices, the County offices, the courts and certain branches of departments of the main City government it would appear logical to locate the civic centre at a point in reasonably close proximity to the geographical centre of the Borough. This point has been determined to be approximately at the intersection of Jamaica avenue and Van Wyck boulevard, about one-half of a mile west of Jamaica.

Three sites have been submitted in this general locality, one at Kew Gardens, another just to the east of Jamaica and a third at the Parental Home located about two miles northwest of Jamaica. A site is also proposed at Elmhurst, located about two miles west of the Parental Home and about four miles northwest of Jamaica. The remaining sites submitted are not centrally located in the Borough.

The Kew Gardens site is located at the easterly junction of Queens boulevard and Grand Central parkway, two major thoroughfares; the Jamaica site on either side of Hillside avenue near the northeasterly boundary of Jamaica, and the Elmhurst site at the easterly junction of Queens boulevard with Horace Harding boulevard. Assuming that the cost of acquiring any one of these sites would be equal to twice the assessed valuation, it is evident that an expenditure of more than a million dollars would be required to buy the land. Under present financial conditions it is doubtful if the City is in a position to provide the necessary funds to acquire a site. If a site is to be improved at this time, as is desired by the Borough President, with funds to be provided by the Federal government, the cost of the land might therefore be a controlling feature in its selection. Under these conditions the City-owned Parental Home site is the only site submitted that meets the requirement of involving no expenditure for the land. It is doubtful if the Federal government would provide funds to acquire the land for a site.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

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The Parental Home site advocated by the Borough President comprises the westerly portion of lands under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education, and used as a juvenile disciplinary institution; the easterly portion of the said lands being partially improved, primarily with modern buildings of an attractive type. The consent of the Board of Education would be required to the transfer of jurisdiction over the lands for the proposed use. This site is located about two miles directly to the north of the geographical centre of the Borough. The surrounding territory is generally undeveloped. The site would be bounded on the west by Cedar Grove Cemetery and on the east by the Parental Home. The cemetery constitutes a permanent use, but the Parental Home might be abandoned when the surrounding area is intensively developed. The development plan submitted shows a plot unsubdivided by streets with the Borough Hall as the main building located in the middle of the tract, facing Main street, which street has been acquired at a width of 100 feet. The cemetery occupies the opposite side of Main street. Surrounding the Borough Hall there would ultimately be six other buildings for various related uses.

The Borough President proposes to construct at this time the Borough Hall, the City Building, the County Building and the central heating plant and garage at a total estimated cost of \$8,000,000 and at a later time the Supreme Court building and an Auditorium. He states that the City is paying \$375,000 per annum in rental for space now occupied by departments.

If the proposed development is carried out with Federal funds and a 30 per cent. grant is made to the City the loan could be amortized at 4 per cent. in 25 years on the basis of an annual payment of \$358,460, which is practically equal to the annual rental now being paid by the City.

The Parental Home site is reasonably near the geographical centre of the Borough and the land appears to be physically adaptable for economical development. An ideal site, however, should become the centre of an intensive business development surrounded by residential areas, resulting in increased return to the City through taxation. This condition could never be fully realized in the case of the Parental Home site as on one side there is a large area devoted to cemetery purposes. This feature might be deemed sufficiently objectionable to justify the rejection of this site. The principal frontage for the site is on Main street which is not in use but this is not of serious moment as in undeveloped areas such as this, street access can be provided at moderate expense and undoubtedly connections would have to be planned between the site and important thoroughfares in the locality. In this general connection it might be noted that the location of a site at the junction of major thoroughfares might be more disadvantageous and considerably more expensive than if the site was located slightly removed therefrom. Furthermore in the case of any site selected in an undeveloped area, transit facilities would of necessity have to be provided and would naturally follow the development of the civic centre.

There are no records available to show that there are any vacant City-owned lands of adequate area for a civic centre in the general vicinity under consideration, excepting the Parental Home site and lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity near the headwaters of the Flushing River. The latter property consists primarily of a low lying swampy area. Its development would undoubtedly involve a considerable expense over a large adjoining area in order to consolidate the subsurface soil. A site at this location even if a release of the land could be obtained from the Department of Water Supply could not be developed for a long time. In case the location and surroundings at the Parental Home site are deemed sufficiently objectionable to justify its rejection, there appears to be no alternative except to purchase the necessary land. If the latter course is resorted to, financial conditions would probably delay the project for a long time.

In my judgment if funds were available to purchase land for a civic centre for the Borough, the site should be located upon the undeveloped area to the northwest of Jamaica and as near as practicable to this community.

Through the absence of proper City planning, adequate civic centres have not been provided in any of the Boroughs of the Greater City. As a result Borough offices are not properly concentrated and any attempt to accomplish this result has proven costly to the City by reason of expensive condemnation. In the Boroughs of Queens and Richmond where there are still large undeveloped areas, available sites for civic centres can be obtained at a reasonable cost. Proper City planning would appear to clearly dictate the necessity of giving this question serious consideration at the earliest practicable date.

Under existing conditions the Board should determine the following questions:

1. Is it desired to construct a civic centre in the Borough of Queens at the present time through an application for Federal funds to finance the project?
2. Are there funds available to purchase land for a site for a civic centre?
3. If no funds are available to purchase a site, does the Board favor the selection and improvement of the Parental Home site?

Respectfully,

HERMAN H. SMITH, Chief Engineer.

ANALYSIS OF REPORT OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE

During the period of public hearings before the Board of Estimate and Apportionment and the City Planning Commission of the City of New York a multiplicity of sites was submitted for the location of the Queens Civic Centre. Subsequently the City Planning Commission was abolished and further conduct of investigations normally reverted to the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate. The final report of the Chief Engineer was released January 13th, 1934 and confirms the general recommendations made in my original report of March 23, 1931.

The official report of the Chief Engineer concurs in the following affirmative principles:

1. The civic centre should be located in close proximity . . . to the center of the Borough of Queens . . . in Jamaica.
2. If funds were available to purchase land for a civic centre the site should be located as near as practicable to Jamaica.
3. Available sites for a civic centre can be purchased at reasonable cost in Queens; in contrast to the procedure in the other boroughs of New York City where neglect in previous years necessitated the acquisition of costly property in fully developed areas.
4. An ideal site should be the centre of an extensive business development and surrounded by residential areas.
5. The civic centre should be designed to endure in perpetuity.

With these affirmative principles I continue in full agreement.

The report of the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate further includes the following statements of negation and I append such comment as appears pertinent thereto:

1. The selection of a civic centre site should not be involved in community controversies.
2. The Borough President of Queens has proposed to construct at this time the Borough Hall, a County Building, a City Building, and a central heating plant and garage at a total estimated cost of \$8,000,000 with no cost for land. A courts building and an auditorium will be constructed *in the future*.

Comment: No provision is made for the present erection of the Supreme Court and Lower Courts buildings in the Borough President's plan. These are important adjuncts of a civic centre and are vitally needed in Queens. The existing court accommodations verge on the disgraceful. It would appear that an expenditure of \$8,000,000

for buildings should permit inclusion of all needed structures, including the court buildings, at once. The auditorium may be deferred indefinitely in favor of the more urgently needed public buildings.

The PWA will not grant loans on projects inadequate for future needs. (see Haverhill Hospital case)

3. The development plan submitted for the Parental Home site shows a plot undeveloped by streets. A cemetery occupies the opposite side of the acquired but unopened Main Street on which the Borough Hall would face.

Comment: The cemetery tract is about equal in area to the Parental Home tract. This undesirable outlook of such extent immediately before the proposed group of public buildings is an unanswerable objection to this location for a civic centre. The paucity of illumination in a cemetery at night and the expanse of tomb-stones by day presents a violation of aesthetic requirements no less serious than the economic phase involved in the permanent use area as a cemetery.

The Parental Home site bounded on the west by a large cemetery, on the east by a disciplinary institution and grounds, and on the south by a non-existent Main Street is ideal for its present use as a place of detention for juveniles. Its only claim to consideration as a civic centre site is that it is city owned but this is fallacious reasoning. The relocation of the Parental Home would involve purchase of a new site by the city. Expenditures for sewers, paving, and incidentals to make the site accessible and useable for a civic centre would off-set the illusory advantage of this 'city owned' site as a 'cost-free' site.

4. The Parental Home site is located about two miles north of Jamaica; the surrounding area is generally undeveloped; the site is bounded on the west by Cedar Grove Cemetery and on the east by the Parental Home. The cemetery comprises a permanent use but the Parental Home *might* be abandoned when the surrounding area is sufficiently developed.

Comment: If the Parental Home is abandoned in this location it must be relocated elsewhere. It cannot be abolished as an institution. The surrounding undeveloped land of the Parental Home tract is presently relied upon to preserve the isolation required for the well-being of unconfined juvenile delinquents of the class of truants and unadjusted children.

5. An ideal site should become the centre of an intensive business development surrounded by residential areas, resulting in increased return to the City by taxation. This condition could never be fully realized in the case of the Parental Home site as on one side there is a large area devoted to cemetery purposes. *This feature might be deemed sufficiently objectionable to justify the rejection of this site.*

Comment: It is better practice to utilize existing centres of intensive business development and existing residential areas than to hope that future events will produce this

desirable radial growth. The impediment of a cemetery to such development precludes even the hoped for future environment in the Parental School location.

6. The Parental Home site under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education is used presently as a juvenile disciplinary institution, partly improved with modern buildings of an attractive type.

Comment: There is an obvious impropriety of purpose in the proximity of the juvenile disciplinary institution to public buildings in daily use by great numbers of people. Such proximity is violative of the exclusion required for a disciplinary institution of the character of the Parental Home where confinement to buildings is not employed or desirable for the children there resident.

7. The principal frontage of the Parental Home site is on Main Street which is not in use but street access can be provided.

Comment: It seems that the costs of providing street access have been minimized. These may conceivably be appreciable amounts. In any case it appears poor practice to spend money to make a site accessible by streets when sites in developed sections with ample streets are available.

8. Transit facilities to the Parental Home site would of necessity have to be provided.

Comment: The cost of subway transportation alone would involve additional millions of dollars and years of delay in design and construction of the actual subway. This expenditure to make the Parental Home site accessible is not justified in view of the fact that sites available in Jamaica are located on the line of a practically completed subway with stations close at hand. The fact that the Parental Home site may represent no outlay of monies for land is negligible when the costs of making the site useable are estimated.

9. In case the *location* and *surroundings* at the Parental Home are deemed sufficiently objectionable to justify its rejection there appears to be no alternative except to purchase the necessary land.

Comment: Rejection of the Parental Home site is assumed as a natural procedure.

Jamaica therefore provides two sites.

The site submitted in 1931 will require purchase of additional land to round out city owned frontage and frontage on which easements have been secured by the city. The central feature of the plan is a city owned park which in the civic centre design for this location preserves its identity as a park.

The additional site submitted on March 9th, 1934 represents an area of approximately five acres of city owned property which will not require any additional land in the design proposed for this site.

With these criticisms of the Parental Home site as contained in the official report of the Chief Engineer I am in agreement. My comments in each instance are intended to define the direct and implied objections to this site.

* * * *

In summary, after investigating all sites proposed, the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate officially reports as follows:

1. Three sites have been submitted in the general locality of Jamaica
 - (a) One at Kew Gardens
 - (b) One at the Parental Home
 - (c) One just to the east of Jamaica

A site is also proposed at Elmhurst located about two miles west of the Parental Home and *four* miles northwest of Jamaica.

The remaining sites are not centrally located in the borough.

Comment: Since the original hearings in 1931 circumstances have made available a city owned parcel in Jamaica, identified as the Normal School site. The official report of January 13, 1934 antedated submission of the Normal School site hence no reference to this site is made in the Chief Engineer's report other than as may be implied from his general references to Jamaica. This city-owned Jamaica site was submitted on March 9, 1934.

Detailed plans for the development of the respective Jamaica sites will be separately discussed in detail hereinafter.

2. The Kew Gardens site is located at the easterly junction of Queens Boulevard and Grand Central Parkway, two major thoroughfares. The assessed valuation is \$500,000 and the probable cost \$1,000,000. In this connection it might be noted that the location of a site at the junction of two major thoroughfares might be *more disadvantageous* and considerably more expensive than if the site was located slightly removed therefrom.

Comment: The Kew Gardens site is distant two miles from the center of Jamaica. The corner plot admits frontage on only two thoroughfares, both inter-county traffic routes. Each roadway is a wide, active, multiple laned fast travel route. To this extent the bounding thoroughfares at the Kew Gardens site are isolating factors. Radial development of the undeveloped adjoining area is limited by these avenues and is further prescribed by the parked aspect of Grand Central Parkway with its set back frontages thereon to the parallel service roads for entrance and exit.

At the intersection of these two highways an elaborate sub-surface plan for handling the volume of cross traffic necessitated a long underpass with open cut and stone lateral walls extending east and west for a considerable distance. Immediately opposite a vast stretch of low land, many feet below grade and formerly occupied by the Department of Water, Gas and Electricity as a pumping station site, presents a long expanse of

swampy ground difficult to develop at this time and undoubtedly for many years to come. The car storage and repair yards of the Manhattan-Queens subway system are also included in this perspective. It may be interpolated that no community sought the location of these yards at the time of their location for obvious reasons.

The Kew Gardens site *declines* considerably from Queens Boulevard. Terraced fill or variation of building heights is implied to maintain the horizontal plane of future buildings on a parity with the initial development. Submitted plans indicate a large reserve for future building with temporary use of the land for automobile parking. This is an expensive expedient and such use is of doubtful desirability on Grand Central Parkway. The profile of the plot invites consideration as to whether it is physically adaptable to the purpose of a civic centre.

The plan submitted for development confines itself principally to the Queens Boulevard frontage and higher level. There appears to be insufficient divorcement of the various departments and no isolation of the court functions in the floor space provided. While referred to as three buildings the plan suggests a single building with a taller central portion and lateral wings physically connected thereto. The building itself lacks distinction. The inherent limitations of the site may prevent more adequate treatment.

This site is deficient with respect to suitable environment, street parking for automobiles, developmental influence, and aspect requirements. There appears to be no special advantage in the Kew Gardens site except its proximity to Jamaica and its better transit facilities in comparison with the Parental Home site.

3. The Parental Home site advocated by the Borough President is located *two miles* directly north of Jamaica the center of the borough.

Comment: More definite street boundaries of the Parental Home site are not possible as the site is generally confined by intervening parcels at present in the absence of street development. While the Chief Engineer's report includes this site as 'in the general locality of Jamaica' it will be noted that he subsequently places it 'two miles north' of that centre of the borough which is in Jamaica. Analysis of the Chief Engineer's report hereinbefore has indicated the objections to this site for a civic centre. The city owned feature must not obscure all other considerations nor must the size of this area create the illusion of advantage when this may be actually a disadvantage.

This site is considered unsuitable for the erection of a civic centre.

4. The Jamaica site is on either side of Hillside Avenue near the northeasterly boundary of Jamaica.

Comment: This site is definitely in Jamaica, convenient to the business centre, and surrounded by a residential development. Previous general reference to Jamaica as the center of the borough is applicable.

This Jamaica site is distinctive from all other sites in that it utilizes both sides of the streets comprehended in its location surrounding an existing small park.

* * * *

The alternative Jamaica site submitted after the Chief Engineer had made his report is located slightly off the intersection of two main thoroughfares in Jamaica. This site is more limited in area but possesses the general advantages of a Jamaica location.

It will be noted the Chief Engineer in his report makes no adverse comment on the original Hillside Avenue location other than to refer to the necessity for acquisition by purchase. If this is ultimately impossible in any circumstances this objection is removed in connection with the Normal School site in Jamaica.

Comment: A casual reference is made in the Chief Engineer's report to the Elmhurst site. As this is located four miles from Jamaica, the admitted center of the borough, and is only a parcel situated on Queens Boulevard amidst many like vacant parcels in that vicinity it is not considered necessary to elaborate on the inadequacy of this location. A location on the wide, multiple traffic lanes of Queens Boulevard is not advantageous.

Originally the Elmhurst site was low lying ground. It has since been filled to grade and is therefore a flat parcel devoid of relieving contours. It is a matter to be determined as to whether the bearing qualities at this site are ample for large buildings without recourse to expensive piles and footings not required in a more substantial subterranean structure.

The general inadequacies of the Kew Gardens site, also on Queens Boulevard, apply to the Elmhurst tract.

Where a better choice exists one-side-of-the-street-vacant-lots should be rejected in civic centre development.

* * * *

It is unnecessary to discuss any others of the many sites suggested in view of their elimination from further consideration after official investigation as indicated in the report of the Chief Engineer.

* * * *

In concluding this analysis of the official report submitted to the Board of Estimate by the Chief Engineer it is pertinent to note that invariably he has oriented and located each proposed site with respect to its distance from Jamaica. This is significant evidence of Jamaica's central location and advantages as the present informal civic centre of the Borough of Queens.

On the basis of this analysis it is gratifying to note that the conclusions of the Chief Engineer after full investigation over an ample period agree with the findings embodied in my report of March 23, 1931 wherein I recommended a specific Jamaica location for the Queens Civic Centre.

When engineering reports based on separate investigations and submitted non-concurrently after several years agree in their general premises it is reasonable to assume that the conclusions therein are correct with respect to location, city planning principles and use values; and therefore promotive of the public interest.

The premise that a suitable site in Jamaica is the most logical location for a civic centre serving the whole Borough of Queens has been sustained. The unsuitableness of the Parental Home site and the inadequacy of the Kew Gardens site leaves only those sites in Jamaica proper, of the three locations specified in the official report, as meeting the requirements of a centralized civic centre. Upon careful consideration of the three sites specifically designated by the Chief Engineer after eliminating all others, I recommend

That the Queens Civic Centre be erected in Jamaica.

I submit

That the Hillside Avenue site in Jamaica involves a reasonably proportionate outlay to purchase land to augment the present city owned land represented at this site. This site, however, permits unrestricted opportunity for obtaining a 'center aspect' in its development as a Civic Centre.

That the Normal School site in Jamaica requires no expenditure for land and may be effectively developed within the limitations imposed by its five acres to provide a group of co-related public buildings.

* * * *

In concluding his report the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate submits the following questions to which I append replies:

Q. Is it desirable to construct a civic centre in the Borough of Queens at present?

A. The City of New York consists of five boroughs having each a local government. In four of these boroughs, namely Manhattan, Kings, Bronx and Richmond, the public offices and courts are accommodated in publicly owned buildings located and designed for their respective purposes. The contrary situation in Queens that has existed for many years has now become intolerable. In Queens with a population in excess of 1,200,000 the borough, county, city and judicial offices are housed in such environment and in such quarters as would not be endured in the most backward community. The Borough offices occupy a rented loft building in an industrial area environed by factories and railroad yards and are located in the extreme northwest portion of the borough. The city offices in most cases occupy space in office buildings in Jamaica, or Long Island City ten miles distant, in common tenancy with the usual diversified occupancy of rented office buildings. The County offices are housed in small, obsolete buildings in Jamaica with no coherent plan of location, and adjacent to an elevated railroad structure in the very heart of the most active business area in the borough. Court accommodations, including the Supreme Courts and Lower Courts, occupy cramped space in rented quarters in office buildings, stores, bowling alleys or ancient edifices in both Jamaica and Long Island City without plan or purpose.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

Not a single public office, borough, county, city, or judicial is adequately located in any co-related plan nor in any building of proper design and aspect with the exception that the Children's Court Building in Jamaica was designed for its particular use.

In such circumstances the aesthetic values and the convenience phases of proper planning and design are totally non-existent in the public offices of Queens collectively and individually. As might be expected in such bad situation the economic phase is equally unfavorable. For the poor accommodations now obtained the City pays the following in annual rents:

1933 City Charges:

Borough President	\$100,872.80
Courts	45,182.66
Finance Department	88,753.60
Taxes & Assessments	24,573.00
Law Department	10,392.00
Department Public Welfare	1,080.00
Tenement House Department	6,938.25
	<hr/>
	\$277,792.31 sub-total

1933 County Charges:

Courts	40,883.00
Public Administrator	1,600.00
County Clerk	33,000.00
	<hr/>
Total "civic centre feature" rentals.....	\$ 75,483.00 sub-total
	<hr/>
	\$353,275.31

Erecting a civic centre in Jamaica on either of the two sites submitted would remedy the conditions that have become unendurable. The designs proposed conform to the best practice in modern city planning within an established area. The cost involved if amortized over a reasonable period would not exceed the sum paid in rents for the obsolete quarters now occupied.

Therefore the immediate erection of a civic centre is vigorously recommended.

Q. Are there funds available to purchase land for a site for a civic centre?

A. Too much emphasis may be placed on the issue of city owned land *vs.* land requiring purchase. The permanency of a civic centre and the cost of buildings certainly justifies a suitable site both with respect to its location in reference to the whole borough, its accessibility and existing improvements of streets, sewers and transportation and its inherent advantages of adaptability to proper designing in the disposition of the buildings with relation to each other.

Admittedly a large tract of city owned land is represented by the Parental Home site. Its use as a civic centre location would eventually require removal of the Parental Home buildings. Thus the 'city owned' land if utilized for a civic centre would necessitate 'city purchased land' elsewhere unless an equal usable area exists for relocating the Parental Home. No such replacement site is recorded. The added cost of replacing the

existing modern buildings of the Parental Home must be considered in estimating this expense. Interpretation of modern correctional methods as applied to school children of minor age is beyond the scope of an engineering report. It would seem that to maintain those home contacts provided by frequent visits to the children being disciplined for truancy or trained because of poor social adjustment is most desirable. This precludes location of the Parental Home outside the suburban limits of New York City. Therefore any replacement purchase might well equal if not exceed the amount required to purchase a civic centre site. The Parental Home property is at present under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education. Its release would be required and this has not yet been effected.

Another parcel of 'city owned land' is available in Jamaica. This plot has been occupied by a Normal School for teacher training. That use has been discontinued. The building itself is old and lacks modern conveniences and safety features. It is unsuited to use as a school. The tract itself is of certain limited area but will accommodate three separate buildings. In this respect it is ample for the design of a civic centre of the type indicated in the drawings accompanying this report.

This property is likewise under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education. No purchase of adjacent land is contemplated in the development of this site as a civic centre.

The existing transit facilities, location, and general environment characteristic of Jamaica should be considered in connection with this five acre plot. It is submitted primarily because it meets the conditions of a location in Jamaica and requires no expenditure for land. A fuller description will be made as this report proceeds.

* * * *

The original site recommended for the location of a civic centre in Jamaica is not entirely city owned. This site embraces several separate blocks or 'city squares' as bounded by existing paved streets. These blocks centre about a city owned park and are located on both sides of the existing avenue and radial streets therefrom. Part of one block is city owned and with respect to the largest parcel included a permanent easement of 27,186 square feet and temporary surface rights of 46,700 feet were acquired by the City of New York. Payment is in process of determination and might reasonably be absorbed in an outright purchase with advantage to the City. It is a matter to be determined as to whether easements are less costly than outright purchase. Land to be acquired in addition represents vacant plots or lots encumbered with temporary structures and small frame dwellings of inexpensive type.

This site provides the *vista aspect* desired in all approaches of existing entering streets and affords unrestricted possibilities in the treatment of the group and each individual building. Six buildings are included in the design proposed for the civic centre at this site.

The cost of land to be acquired should not exceed \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 and may involve less. It has been deemed not advisable to attempt to actually determine prices

or to secure options for transfer to the City hence only the assessed values for 1933 are given. The total assessed values are shown on the assessment map. From these should be deducted the adjustment incident to compromising for easement and surface rights previously obtained by the City. The land to be acquired represents not a few large owners which might be suggestive of real estate manipulation but includes perhaps fifty small parcels. The assessment map accompanying this report illustrates the distribution of assessed values for the land indicated.

In connection with the purchase of a Jamaica site the disposition of non-required public buildings now in Jamaica should be considered. While it may or may not be possible for the City of New York to purchase a civic centre site with moneys in the general fund at this time this condition with respect to a Jamaica site is *more apparent than real*.

The antiquated Town Hall Building in Jamaica would not be used if a civic centre were erected in Jamaica. The location of the Town Hall on a corner plot in the heart of the business section, while not suitable for civic centre purposes, is readily saleable for private development. Its normal selling price would approximate \$1,000,000. The sale of the building now occupied by the County Register in Jamaica would further increase this sum to a possible \$2,000,000. Legal opinion discloses that no impediment exists to prevent these sales by the City.

In the ordinary procedure monies from the sale of city property accrues to the Sinking Fund of the City of New York while purchase of land even if concurrent and in the same locality and for identical purposes is treated as a separate transaction. Payment does not come from the Sinking Fund. Of course this is a matter of bookkeeping and as the credit of the City is to that extent improved by acquiring funds from the sale of Jamaica property the federal government might reasonably consider this as justifying a loan to purchase land for the erection of a civic centre when the site is *partly city owned* and the cost of the land is *not an excessive proportion* of the entire amount of the loan for construction, including material and labor.

This suggestion assumes for the purpose of considering all angles that the City itself is reluctant to purchase land but this may be an erroneous assumption. Perhaps some means or amendatory legislation might be devised whereby funds realized from the sale of City property in the circumstances indicated could be applied to purchase land for the same purpose and in the same locality. This is an administrative detail not determinable in this report. Its consummation would facilitate progress considerably.

The Public Works Administration considers each submitted proposal on its individual merits. No actual direct impediment exists to prevent a federal loan for the purchase of land incident to construction of a public project but the purpose of the creating Act implies the limitation that the cost of land shall represent only a reasonable proportion of the amount included for construction costs. The cost of the land required to erect a civic centre to best advantage at the Hillside Avenue site in Jamaica appears to be not disproportionate to the total cost. According as the cost of land, with deductions

for adjusting previous obligations of the city, varies from \$600,000 to \$1,000,000 the proportion in an \$8,000,000 project would be from $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ to $12\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the cost of construction.

When the vast expenditures for identical purposes in all other boroughs of the City of New York are considered, *together with the fact that Queens has paid its share for these improvements in other boroughs*, it is not equitable to place the arbitrary limitation of 'city owned land' on Queens need for a civic centre. It is also a fact that the Jamaica buildings represented by the Town Hall were paid for by Jamaica and the monies realized from their sale should with every propriety be expended in Jamaica.

Evidently then funds are available, or may be made available, for the purchase of land for a site for a civic centre where such site by its superior advantages justifies the expenditure.

Q. If no funds are available to purchase a site does the Board favor the Parental Home site?

A. From the conclusions of the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate as hereinbefore analyzed it is evident that the Parental Home site is not adaptable to the purposes of a civic centre in the absence of transit facilities, local improvements, proper environment, and accessible central location with respect to the borough of Queens.

All arguments in favor of the Parental Home location devote themselves to explanations of how this might be made a suitable site. Such arguments admit the unsuitability of the site as it exists at present without the costly improvements and changes required to make it available as a civic centre development. Even with the improvements required the Parental Home environment is unalterable and lacks all measurable evidence of trends with respect to future circumferential developments. Development of subway facilities alone would involve a tremendous outlay of money and a long delay in approval, design and construction.

Detailed objections to this site as contained in the official report of the Chief Engineer should cause its rejection.

It is the purpose of this report to supplement adverse criticism with constructive suggestions. Therefore it is recommended that either of the Jamaica sites be utilized in developing the Queens Civic Centre and that their respective advantages in general and as developed in each individual design be weighed in determining whether the city owned *Normal School site* or the partly city owned *Hillside Avenue site* be adopted for a Civic Centre which will endure to serve Queen for perpetuity. It becomes important then to discuss the alternative Jamaica sites in terms of detailed development. The Hillside Avenue site and the Normal School site will be discussed separately. Each presents its individual features of utilitarian and aesthetic treatment. Both meet the primary requirement of being located in Jamaica in a business centre surrounded by a residential area and centrally accessible from all parts of the Borough of Queens by railroad, subway, bus, and automobile routes.

Comparative Rating of Sites

This tabulation on the basis of 100 points illustrates the equal importance of various considerations affecting the location of a civic centre. The values accorded each site are not determinable by mathematical accuracy but represent an attempt at fair relative proportionment of the assigned weight for each item. The total weights must not be viewed with literal exactness.

Item	Weight	Jamaica				
		Normal School	Hillside Avenue	Kew Gardens	Parental Home	Elmhurst
Borough Centrality	10	10	10	8	8	5
Transit Facilities	10	10	10	8	0	8
Area plus Frontage	10	5	10	5	7	5
Existing Sewers and Streets	10	10	10	7	3	7
Locality Population	10	10	10	1	0	2
Favorable Trends	10	10	10	0	0	0
Suitable Environment	10	8	10	4	0	4
Circumferential Protection..	10	8	10	6	4	4
Aids to Design	10	5	10	1	4	1
City Owned	10	10	2	0	10	0
TOTAL.....	100	86	92	40	36	36

It appears then that the question of a location involves

City Owned Sites

Normal School in Jamaica, rated 86
Parental Home in Flushing, rated 36

Purchaseable Sites

Hillside Avenue in Jamaica, rated 92
Kew Gardens tract, rated 40

Building Dimensions and Facilities

In the design of the Civic Centre for the Borough of Queens on the alternate sites in Jamaica the floor space requirements indicated by the Borough President have been maintained.

It is assumed that the space for the City, County and Borough offices and for the Courts was determined by the Borough President to provide for all reasonable future needs.

The Borough President's Plan provided approximately:

In a Borough Hall 150,000 square feet of floor space—3 stories—50,000 ground area
In a City Building 100,000 square feet of floor space—3 stories—34,000 ground area
In a County Building 100,000 square feet of floor space—3 stories—34,000 ground area

And indicates future provision for

A Courts Building—100,000 square feet of floor space.

An Auditorium.

A Central Heating Plant.

These areas are incorporated in the 'Hillside Avenue' design and in the 'Normal School' design for locations within Jamaica.

The Auditorium and Central Heating features are provided in both Jamaica designs without recourse to additional buildings for this limited purpose.

Economics

Present rentals for all quarters to be housed in the civic centre buildings approximated \$350,000 for 1933 budgeting. An additional \$150,000 in rentals represents a recurring item of field and district offices which cannot be centralized. In addition to rentals various offices occupying city owned buildings in Jamaica will be relocated in the new civic centre buildings but these are ignored in the following calculations:

Present annual rentals for public offices and courts in Queens	\$ 350,000
This is equal to 4% interest on	\$8,750,000

The civic centre designed for the Normal School site in Jamaica would involve the following financing:

Cost of Land	none
Cost of 3 Buildings	\$5,000,000
Federal grant of 30%	1,500,000
Balance as loan	3,500,000
4% Interest on loan	140,000 (reducing annually as loan is amortized)
Payment on 30 year loan	116,666
Total annual payments	256,666 (maximum)
Indicated annual savings on rentals	\$93,333

The civic centre designed for the Hillside Avenue site in Jamaica involves similar financing as follows:

Cost of land	\$ 750,000
Estimated Cost of 6 Buildings	5,600,000
Proportionate cost of land to project	11.8%
Proportionate cost of land to buildings	13.4%
Federal grant 30% for buildings	\$1,680,000
Balance as loan	\$3,920,000
4% Interest on loan	146,800 (reduced annually)
Payment on 30 year loan	130,666
Total annual payments	277,466 (maximum)
Indicated Savings on rentals	\$ 72,534

Footnote: Minor costs of street improvements are estimated and not considered in these figures. (Normal School \$25,000 and Hillside Avenue \$8,000)

Cost of land for a Jamaica site could with propriety be assumed by the City of New York in view of the moneys realized from sale of city owned buildings in Jamaica no longer required on completion of the civic centre.

However, the Public Works Administration may loan money for land where the cost is not disproportionate to the cost of the labor-creating project. If the indicated

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

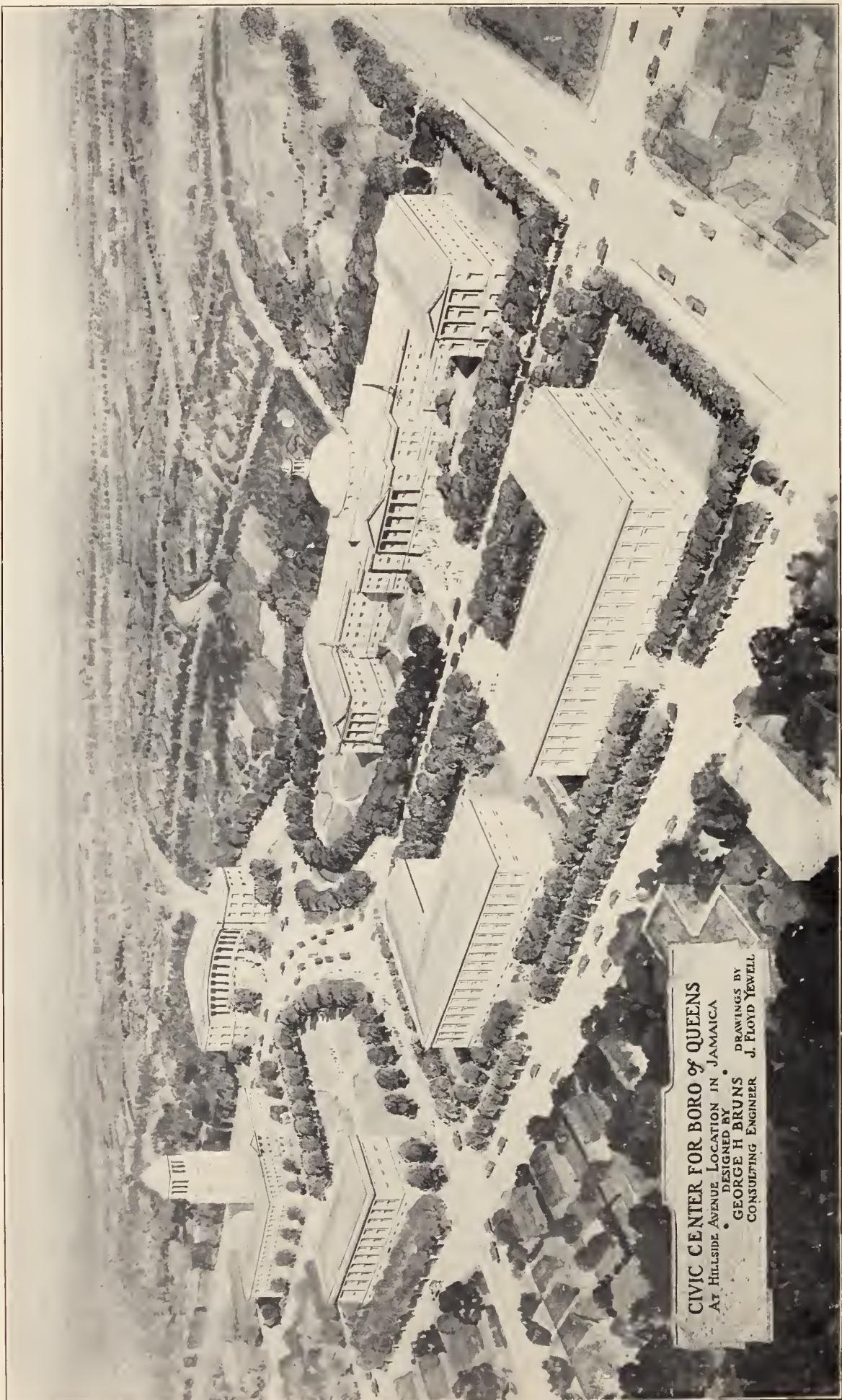
proportion of 13.4% is approved and money for required land advanced by the Federal government the figures for the Hillside Avenue project would then be as follows:

Federal grant for buildings and land	\$1,905,000
Balance as loan	4,445,000
4% Interest on loan	177,800
	(reduced annually)
Payment on 30 year loan	148,166
Total annual payments	325,966
Indicated savings on rentals	\$ 24,034

To this saving of \$24,000 should be added the value of the moneys received by the City of New York from the sale of Jamaica property no longer required for public offices on completion of the civic centre. About \$1,750,000 will be so realized.

Development of either Jamaica location results in an actual saving to the City with vastly improved facilities. Either plan, i. e., the use of city owned land at the Normal School site or the accumulation of additional land at the Hillside Avenue site, by city purchase or through federal aid, will require annual cash outlay by the city less than the present rentals for inadequate and partial requirements.





CIVIC CENTER FOR BORO OF QUEENS

At Hillside Avenue, location in Jamaica

DESIGNED BY

GEORGE H. BRUNS
CONSULTING ENGINEER

DRAWINGS BY
J. FLOYD YEWELL

DETAILED REPORT ON THE HILLSIDE AVENUE SITE IN JAMAICA

Scope of Plan:

The design for the Queens Civic Centre utilizing city owned land, land carrying easements to the City of New York, and additional land to be purchased to complete the Hillside Avenue site comprehends erection of six buildings. Reference to the detailed plan view will indicate the disposition of the Borough Hall, the Supreme Court Building, the Lower Courts Building, the City Building, the Register Building and the County Clerk Building. A central heating plant in the basement of Lower Courts Building is included to serve all buildings. The site provides individual locations separated by existing streets or projected street extensions. Each building presents a separate setting but the whole design is co-ordinated to obtain the maximum of civic centre advantage in every respect. The axial arrangement of the buildings parallels existing streets. The small city park around which the development is disposed accentuates the effect of grouping about a central open area.

The Supreme Court is located on an eminence sloping to Kingston Road above Hillside Avenue. The Borough Hall occupies a slightly lower elevation on the slope from Hillside Avenue to Wexford Terrace. Both buildings face the south on Hillside Avenue and are accessible from the rear by Kingsland Road and by Wexford Terrace respectively. Each building is visible from the other by virtue of the curve in Hillside Avenue at this point. The Borough Hall affords a distant vista along Hillside Avenue from the west and an off-axis view northerly from 175th Street. The Supreme Court affords a view from the east along Wexford Terrace and a partial vista from Hillside Avenue east.

Opposite the Borough Hall and in axial symmetry therewith the County Clerk Building and the Register Building occupy the long block or 'city square' and balance the Borough Hall in the civic centre design. Both these buildings are located on the south side of Hillside Avenue and are accessible from the rear by 88th Avenue. Both buildings provide full facade exposure on four sides and are viewed through LaFayette Park in approaching along Hillside Avenue from the west.

The Lower Courts Building is in a recessed position facing LaFayette Park as improved by reforming its south border at Warwick Crescent, a purposeless street. This arrangement continues the centering influence developed around LaFayette Park. Frontage on the park provides a retired setting for these much frequented lower courts. The building is incorporated in the design as an integral part of the Civic Centre by its individual placement in a block bounded by existing streets and the projected extension of 88th Avenue as the south boundary. The Lower Courts Building also provides four facades and is viewed through LaFayette Park from Wexford Terrace, the elevated streets north of Hillside Avenue, and from a close east and west approach on Hillside Avenue.

The City Building is placed opposite the Supreme Court Building and is projected beyond the axis of the Lower Courts Building. This arrangement balances the Supreme

Court location in the civic centre design and completes the circular effect about LaFayette Park. This building is also protected by those defining streets which bound the block it occupies, and therefore presents the four facades and entrance facilities which are characteristic of each building in the design. The City Building is viewed through LaFayette Park from Hillside Avenue east. The tower feature varies the horizontal plane in the design to emphasize the portal effect of a westerly approach.

All buildings are considered with such regard to harmony of form and material as secures the co-relation of each building to the whole design while avoiding the monotony of mere duplication of type. It will be noted that each building is visible from every other building. Vistas are obtained along numerous streets in various directions. A sense of solidity is created by "*enclosure within*" suggested by the grouping about a common center. Dignity, convenience, and economy of cost and maintenance is readily apparent.

Reference to the plan view of the Hillside Avenue site illustrates the use of both sides of included streets and the central arrangement about LaFayette Park. The radial character of 175th Street, Kingston Road, and Wexford Terrace and the variation in street forms represented by the curve in Hillside Avenue avoid the commonplace grid-iron aspect in this design. Graceful curves in the existing streets of the surrounding area are a welcome relief from the rigidity of straight line grids. The varied elevation of the northern area relieves the level of the southerly portion and affords an opportunity for varying the horizontal plane of the included buildings. The results obtained in the design of the Queens Civic Centre at this location are most unusually effective and afford a *studied naturalness of location* in satisfying contrast to the geometric symmetry imposed by a flat area bounded by straight lines.

The development of this site is most interesting and merits real consideration. The aesthetic values are only indicative of equal practical advantages. Ease of access from all streets and almost unlimited curb parking facilities are among the more obvious conveniences. The maximum of light and air is obtainable on all floors in all seasons and at all hours of the day. The reflected saving in illuminating costs is not inconsiderable, since no inside offices will exist. Existing streets and sidewalks facilitate inter-centre travel without added cost. The whole design is well balanced and insures the maximum of use value and aesthetic advantage.

*In This Design a Real Contribution to the Solution of the Automobile Parking Problem
Has Been Devised in the Use of Parking Strips Inside the Property Line.*

Area:

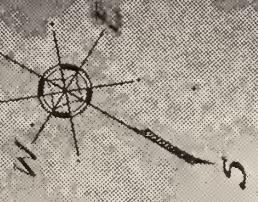
The Hillside Avenue site is located on both sides of Hillside Avenue and extends along that thoroughfare about 1200 feet. Width of the use area may be measured in the rectangle from Highland Avenue to 88th Avenue and from 172nd Street to Edgerton Boulevard, a distance of 1000 feet. This is approximately 27½ acres.

More definitely the site includes the blocks bounded as follows:

Block No. 917—bounded by 172nd Street, W., 173rd Street, E., Hillside Avenue, N., and 88th Avenue extension, S.

LEGEND or Locations.

- 1 Boro Hall Site - CITY EASMENT NOW.
- 2 & 3 COUNTY CLERK BLDG & REGISTER BLDG - SMALL PRIVATE PARCELS
- 4 CITY OFFICES BLDG - CITY OWNED & FOR BLOCK 50 BALANCE SMALL PARCELS
- 5 SUPREME COURT - PRIVATE PARCELS
- 6 ASSESSED 6 ACRES FOR LOWER COURTHOUSE
- 5 SMALL PARCELS
- 6B FUTURE BLDG



N
S
E
W

EDGEWATER BOULEVARD

AVENUE

178TH ST

NOTE: ALL TRACTS
MAY BE SOLD
IF PREFERRED

RIVER RD

HIGHLAND AVENUE

AVENUE

BLOCK 924

390 x 260

ASSESSED \$32,500.

FOR REQUIRED AREA.

6B

CEDAR CROFT PLACE

BLOCK 923

466 x 200 x 60

ASSESSED \$92,800.

LOTS 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

BLOCK 926

115TH STREET

173RD STREET

172ND STREET

171ST STREET

88TH AV

87TH AV

86TH AV

85TH AV

84TH AV

83RD STREET

82ND STREET

81ST STREET

80TH AV

79TH AV

78TH AV

77TH AV

76TH AV

75TH AV

74TH AV

73RD STREET

72ND STREET

71ST STREET

70TH AV

69TH AV

68TH AV

67TH AV

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64TH AV

63RD STREET

62ND STREET

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43RD STREET

42ND STREET

41ST STREET

40TH AV

39TH AV

38TH AV

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35TH AV

34TH AV

33RD STREET

32ND STREET

31ST STREET

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29TH AV

28TH AV

27TH AV

26TH AV

25TH AV

24TH AV

23RD STREET

22ND STREET

21ST STREET

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19TH AV

18TH AV

17TH AV

16TH AV

15TH AV

14TH AV

13TH AV

12TH AV

11TH AV

10TH AV

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6TH AV

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4TH AV

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41ST STREET

42ND STREET

43RD STREET

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48TH AV

49TH AV

50TH AV

51ST STREET

52ND STREET

53RD STREET

54TH AV

55TH AV

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57TH AV

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161ST STREET

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163RD STREET

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165TH AV

166TH AV

167TH AV

168TH AV

169TH AV

170TH AV

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

Block No. 918—frontage city owned—bounded by 173rd Street, W., 175th Street, E., (174th Street non-existent here) Warwick Crescent, N., and 88th Avenue extension, S.

Block No. 921—bounded by 175th Street, W., 178th Street, E., (176th and 177th Streets non-existent here) Hillside Avenue, N., and 88th Avenue, S.

Triangular portion of Block No. 923—bounded by Kingston Road, N., and Hillside Avenue, S., to a westerly line represented by the continuation of the east side of 172nd Street.

Block No. 927—bounded by Hillside Avenue, S., Wexford Terrace, N., and Edgerton Boulevard, E. Incumbered with easement to City of New York.

The illustrated assessment map indicates approximate dimensions of each block.

Hillside Avenue is a county-traversing highway running east and west and crossing north-south traversing highways at frequent intervals easterly and westerly of the civic centre site. These include Myrtle Avenue, Metropolitan Avenue, Queens Boulevard, Parsons Boulevard, Suthphin Boulevard, Lefferts Boulevard-VanWyck Avenue, and Merrick Road to the west; and Hollis Court Boulevard, Cross Island Boulevard, Rocky Hill Road and Little Neck Road to the east.

Placements in the Design:

The grouping in the Hillside Avenue site secures the efficiency of planned arrangement and attains the objective of distinctive identity sought in designing a civic centre. The effectiveness of varied contours is utilized within areas fully protected against encroachment by private buildings. Easy access to each building and facility of travel from one building to another is provided and congestion of traffic avoided by dispersing streets. The problem of automobile parking is answered by the presence of numerous radial streets offering curb parking facilities and incorporation in the design of special Parking Strips. This is the only effective solution of the parking problem yet devised.

The adjacency of the Passionist Monastery and its accompanying Church of the Immaculate Conception is a noteworthy adjunct of this location as will be appreciated from the size of these quasi-public buildings. The apartment house located on the heights just to the west further emphasizes the qualities obtainable in this location. This apartment closes a vista north from 172nd Street.

The width and grades of streets and avenues in this vicinity offer no problem. With the exception of the gradual grade of Kingston Avenue all streets are practically level. Edgerton Boulevard presents a moderate grade but is otherwise a wide well paved wide highway.

Vacant parcels to the east, west, and north suggest the possibility of future expansion of this area of influence by museums, auditoriums, churches, hotels and similar quasi-public buildings, privately initiated. Such a building might well be placed on Wexford Terrace on axis with 175th Street to perfect the ideal at this site. Hillside Avenue

in this locality presents a much more favorable aspect than the more westerly portion since no conversion of residences to temporary business use is evidenced. The north side is generally undisturbed ground, grass covered and relieved with trees. The south side is occupied by one story tax-payers used as real estate offices and the like. The Board of Standards and Appeals of the City of New York recently visited this location in connection with an application for a variance permit under the Zoning Laws. In denying this permit the Board, consisting of a engineer, an architect, a builder, a layman, and the chief of the Fire Department, stated in their official findings: "*This is the best section of Hillside Avenue.*" With the Hillside Avenue subway operating to its present terminus at this site and with extension of the subway easterly as planned, it is fair to assume that the development of this thoroughfare will be of high standard east and west of the Hillside Avenue site for a civic centre.

Purpose:

Every advantage of an established tax-producing protective area is indicated for the Hillside Avenue site in the present environment. While the use area approximates $27\frac{1}{2}$ acres existing streets reduce the actual area required for building purposes to the blocks previously mentioned. The 300 acres surrounding the site on the north, northeast, and northwest are developed with high class dwellings ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 in value. The system of winding streets in this residential area and the prevalence of trees and lawns secures permanent residential park protection. The territory to the south, southeast, and southwest beyond the business zone of Hillside Avenue is built up with more modest homes and occasional apartments to Jamaica Avenue. The advance of business along Hillside Avenue has already extended beyond the civic centre site to Rocky Hill Road, four miles east and exists to the west to Myrtle Avenue, four miles westerly.

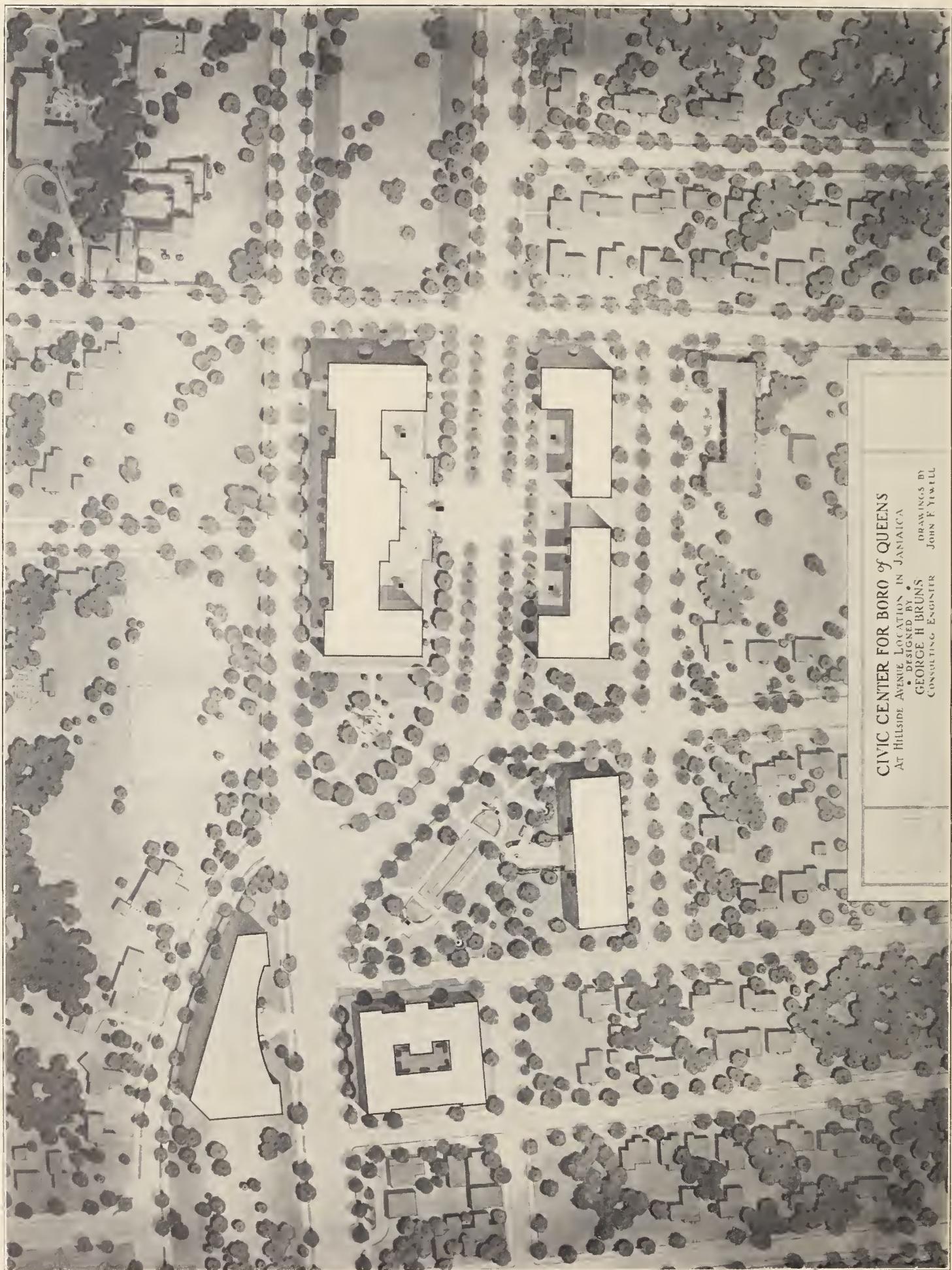
The cost of planting in the vicinity of this site is largely avoided by existing trees on the plots included and along the curb lines of defining streets. These are old trees of good size and valuable. Existing paved streets, sewers, and transportation facilities including subway stations at hand are identified with the Hillside Avenue site.

The purposes of insured development and practical convenience are thus obtainable without the speculative hazard of anticipating such necessary items.

Buildings Indicated:

All buildings comprising the Hillside site as designed for a civic centre face Hillside Avenue and present four facades. In their respective locations the Borough Hall has exposure on three streets; the Supreme Court on two streets; the City Building on four streets; the Lower Courts Building on four streets; and the County Clerk and Register Building each presents direct access from three streets.

The Borough Hall covers a ground area of 60,000 square feet and with three stories provides 180,000 square feet of floor space for all borough departments and offices.



CIVIC CENTER FOR BORO OF QUEENS
At Hillside Avenue Location in JAMAICA

DESIGNED BY • DRAWINGS BY
GEORGE H BRUNS JOHN F YIWELL
CONSULTING ENGINEER

The Supreme Court requires 26,000 square feet of ground and with four stories provides 90,000 square feet of floor space for all parts of the Supreme Court, the Law Library, jurists chambers, clerk's rooms, and consulting rooms for lawyers and litigants.

The Lower Courts Building covers 30,000 square feet of ground space and with three stories offers 90,000 square feet of floor space for court rooms, chambers, jury rooms, and clerk's quarters.

The City Building ground area is 26,000 square feet and with three stories and tower provides 100,000 square feet of floor space. This will accomodate all city departments and bureaus located in Queens.

The County Clerk Building and the Register Building each represent a ground covering of 20,000 square feet and with three stories provide each 60,000 square feet of floor space. The County Clerk's establishment and the offices of the Surrogate and Surrogate's Court will occupy the County Clerk Building. The Register Building will serve to house the offices of the County Register and will afford the filing and storage facilities required for public documents.

Though not presently contemplated the District Attorney and Sheriff with their staffs could be provided for in either of the County Buildings if future policy should so decide.

The practical advantages and conveniences inherent in the whole design will appear on reference to the plan view and the perspective view of the Hillside Avenue site as developed for a civic centre. Isolation and divorce of the courts from too close proximity to public office buildings, accentuated identity of the respective City, County and Borough governmental activities while maintaining ease of inter-centre travel, and the effect of unity in the disposition of the buildings about the central park will be obvious. The open area contributed by the centrally situated LaFayette Park is worth noting and relieves pedestrian congestion.

Soil Bearing and Foundations:

The ground structure represents a sandy sub-soil overlaid with usual top soil. Excavation for large buildings in the close vicinity of the site involved no foundation problems. The proximity of the Monastery, a very large stone edifice and the foundations of the Church as well as nearby apartment houses confirm this conclusion. The site of the civic centre is located on the high ridge running through this section of Long Island for several miles east and west.

Trends:

The trend in the vicinity is decidedly toward high class residences, apartments, and quasi-public buildings surrounded by a wide area of residential character. The location of the civic centre is in direct line of Jamaica's rapid growth eastward beyond the old limits of the community. Hillside Avenue is within the zone of business development protected by the Zoning Laws. No unrestricted zones are included within the area of influence.

The proposed church for which foundations are laid is reported to involve a cost of \$1,000,000 for the building.

Local Convenience of Location:

The following distances from the Hillside Avenue site to prominent features in the community of Jamaica itself indicate the accessibility of the location *within* the accessible center of the borough of Queens.

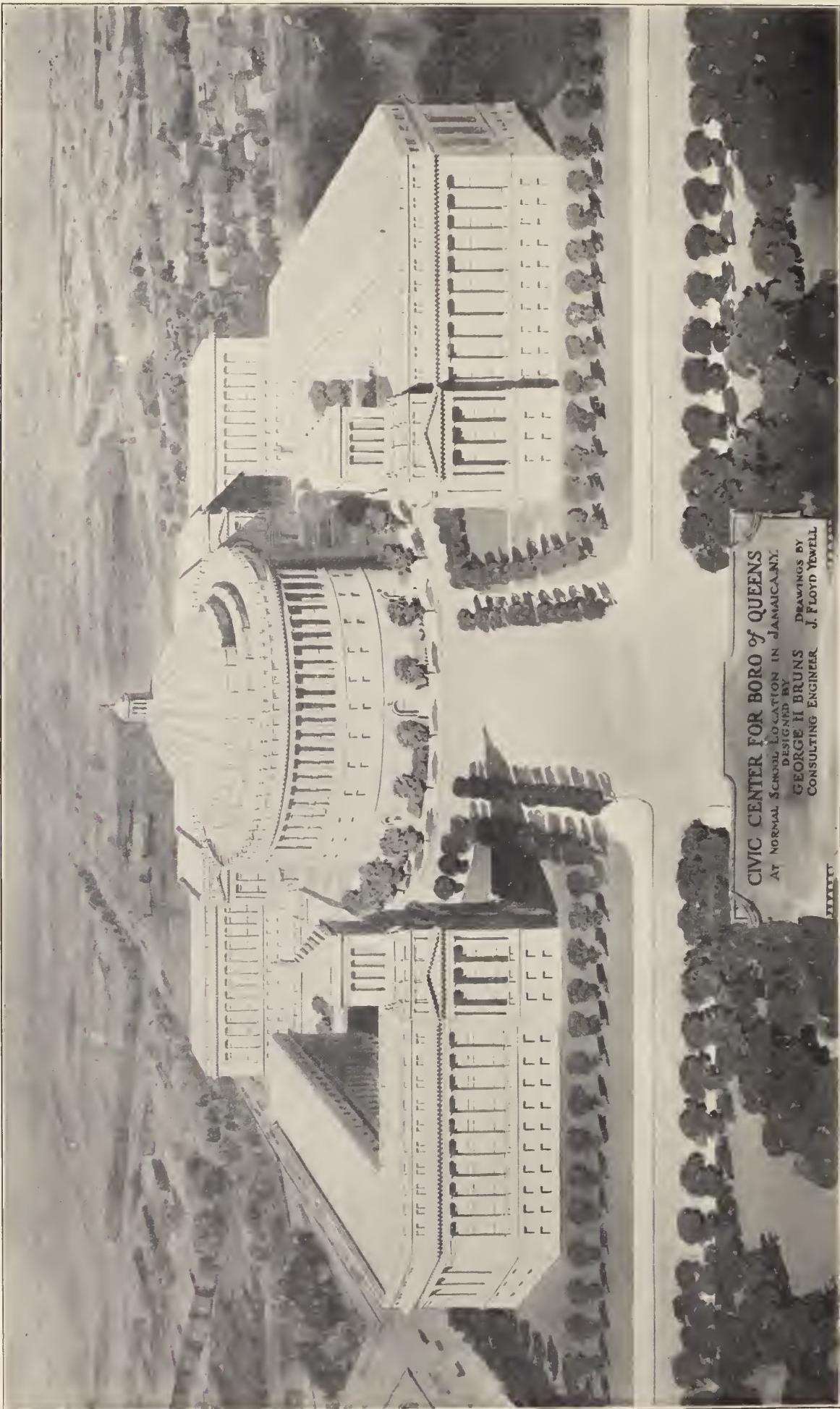
To Normal School Site	$\frac{1}{2}$ Mile West
To L. I. R. R. Main Station	$1\frac{1}{4}$ miles
To Union Hall Station	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Hillside Station	$1\frac{1}{5}$ mile
To Jamaica Bus Terminal	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Subway Station	At Site
To Grand Central Parkway	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
(To Nassau County and Route to Kings, Manhattan and Bronx)	
To Queens Boulevard	$1\frac{3}{4}$ miles
To Merrick Road	$1\frac{1}{5}$ mile
To Jamaica Avenue	$1\frac{1}{5}$ mile
To Parsons Boulevard	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Police Headquarters	$\frac{1}{4}$ mile
To Fire Headquarters	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Queens General Hospital	1 mile
To General Post Office	$\frac{1}{4}$ mile
To N. Y. State Armory	$\frac{1}{4}$ mile
To Jamaica High School	$\frac{1}{4}$ mile
To Old Town Hall	$3\frac{3}{5}$ mile
To Central Library	$3\frac{3}{5}$ mile
To Children's Court	$\frac{1}{4}$ mile
To Passionist Monastery	Adjacent
To Banks, Trust Companies, Title Companies, Office Buildings, Theatres, Stores, etc. comprising the center of Jamaica business section (164th St. and Jamaica Ave.)	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile

Financial Estimate to Complete Project:

Land	\$750,000 depending on easement adjustment.
Grading and Paving new streets	
500' x 50' @ \$3. sq. yd. =	\$8,333.33
Sewers	no cost
Water	no cost
Utilities	no cost
Transportation	no cost
Landscaping	nominal cost

Buildings:

Borough Hall	\$2,000,000
Supreme Court	1,000,000
Lower Courts	700,000
City Building	900,000
County Clerk Building	500,000
Register Building	500,000
Building Total.....	\$5,600,000
Miscellaneous	none
Future charges	none
Total	\$6,358,333



CIVIC CENTER FOR BORO of QUEENS
At NORMAL SCHOOL LOCATION IN JAMAICA, N.Y.
DESIGNED BY
GEORGE H. BRUNS DRAWINGS BY
CONSULTING ENGINEER J. FLOYD YEWELL

DETAILED REPORT ON THE NORMAL SCHOOL SITE IN JAMAICA

Scope of Plan:

The design utilizing the city owned parcel known as the Normal School location comprehends the erection of three buildings comprising the Queens Civic Centre. Reference to the detailed plan view will indicate the disposition of the Borough Hall, the County Office Building and the Courts Building on this plot. In the angular area of the northeast corner a central heating plant is shown. As the land presents a continued slope upward from Highland Avenue toward the rear of the site the Borough Hall, which extends almost across the entire rear width of the tract, is elevated slightly above the County Office Building and the Courts Building. These two buildings have their front facades in a common vertical plane and are located in front of the wings of the Borough Hall. A symmetrical axial arrangement of the buildings parallels Highland Avenue. An outlook over a considerable portion of that section of Jamaica in the immediate foreground is obtained. To a partial extent this view is obstructed by those buildings occupying the shallow block intervening between Highland Avenue and Hillside Avenue but the partial view includes many dominant buildings located in this general vicinity.

Within the tract itself an interior arrangement of roadways 100 feet wide with central malls and decorative features provides liberal curb parking facilities for automobiles and gives direct automobile access to the buildings, thus relieving congestion in the surrounding streets. The roadways also serve to separate the several buildings and provides aspect of all facades while facilitating inter-centre travel from one building to another.

The design is co-related and obtains the maximum possible use value and aesthetic influence in this instance.

Area:

The Normal School site is located at the northeast intersection of Highland Avenue and Parsons Boulevard one short block north of the intersection of Hillside Avenue and Parsons Boulevard, two county traversing highways running east-west and north-south respectively.

The plot is roughly rectangular. The north boundary along the right of way of a trolley system is approximately 520 feet; the westerly boundary on Parsons Boulevard is about 450 feet; the south boundary on Highland Avenue approximates 425 feet; and the property line on the east, which on development of the design will become a screen plantation, is about 600 feet. The area will be bounded by two streets on development and possibly the early abandonment of the trolley system will result in the present right of way reverting to the City which would permit a new street as the north boundary. In this event the site would represent a complete block or 'city square' bounded on the south by Highland Avenue, on the west by Parsons Boulevard, on the east by a new street formed from adjoining land, and on the north by a new street formed by

the right of way and such added width from the tract itself as a might be needed. The use area for buildings and roadways included in the civic centre design would be about five acres.

Placement in the Design:

The grouping in the Normal School arrangement endeavors to secure the advantages of scientific planning in economy and in dignity of design. The elevated site within defining limits of existent and proposed streets is preserved. Easy entrance from the streets is provided. Some measure of solution of the automobile parking problem is afforded by the interior roadways and malls. It may well be stated here that the parking problem for automobiles remains unsolved in city planning. It is certainly not the function of local government to provide public garages, either in separate structures or within the basements of public buildings. Various mechanical contrivances are still of uncertain value. Cost of land and the appearance factor eliminate from consideration the use of large areas for this purpose as is the practice in state parks with extensive acreage in open areas. Hence the alternative continues to be as generous provision of curb line parking as designers may devise. This method has been employed in the Normal School site.

The location of Upland Park and the general approach to Jamaica High School should be considered as factors contributing permanence of character to Highland Avenue.

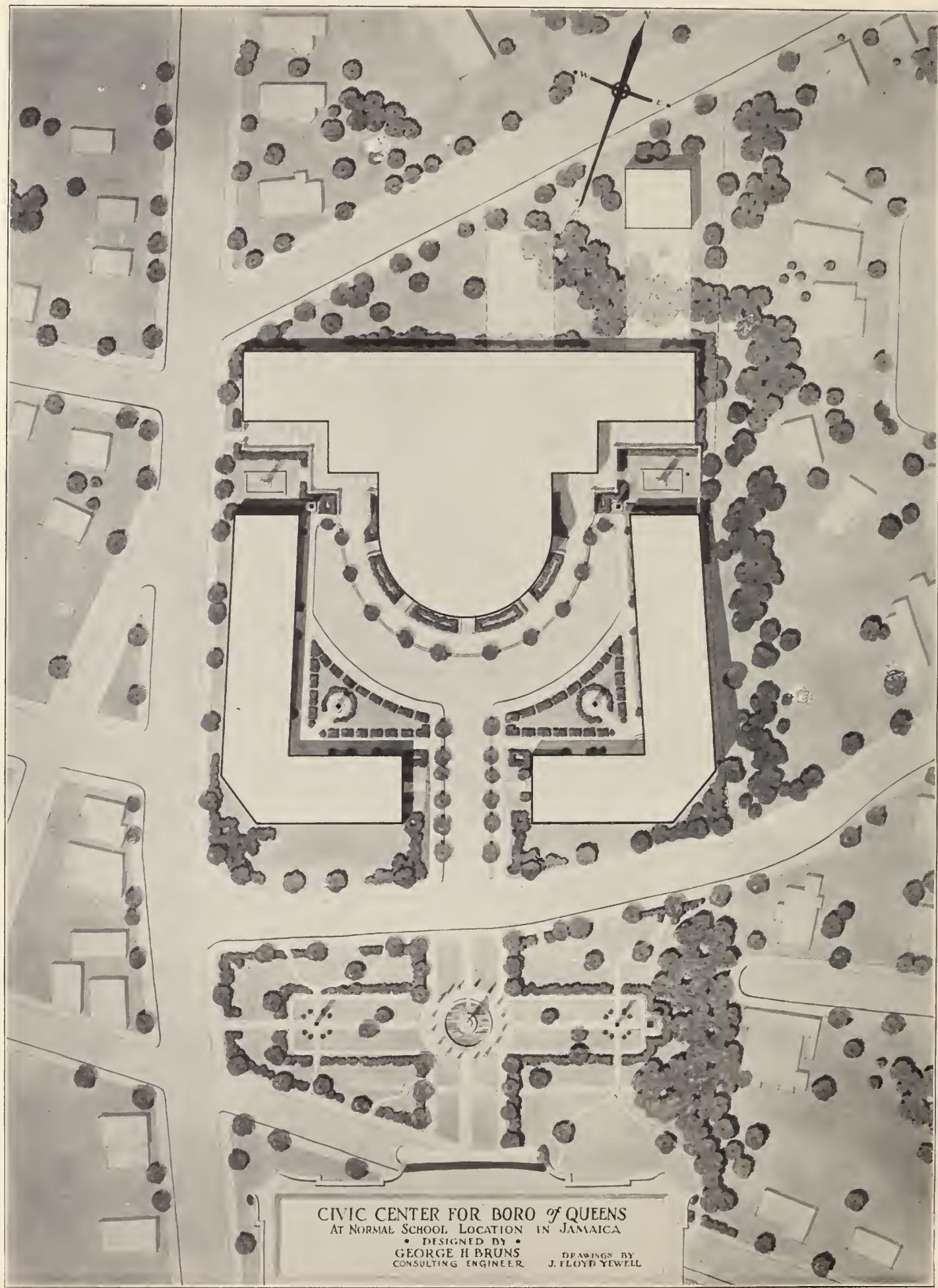
While the width and grades of local streets presented a definite problem at this location it is believed the interior treatment of the plot itself has considerably relieved this situation. The eventual widening and easing of street grades in the natural course of events will further ameliorate this condition.

Irregular blocks to the west presently occupied by unpretentious structures would probably be privately improved with the establishment of the civic centre. Isolated instances of improvement in the environment are indicated by the Jamaica Jewish Centre located immediately to the west. The approach along Parsons Boulevard from the south is flanked by some of the best buildings in Jamaica such as the Y. W. C. A., the Grace Episcopal Church Parish House, St. Mary's Catholic Church, the First Baptist Church, and the Queensborough Central Library. This devolpment will continue south of Hillside Avenue.

Hillside Avenue in this immediate locality as a result of the rapid transition from a residential to a business section presents an unfavorable present impression. This is due to the temporary use of residence structures converted to business use. With the Hillside Avenue subway now completed and the avenue repaved it may reasonably be assumed that the neighborhood will progressively present an improved appearance, particularly as a subway station at the intersection encourages new building.

Purpose:

Certain competitive plans in undeveloped sections of the Borough of Queens contemplated the use of large vacant tracts. This procedure is so obvious that it is com-



CIVIC CENTER FOR BORO *of* QUEENS
At NORMAL SCHOOL LOCATION IN JAMAICA

• DESIGNED BY •
GEORGE H BRUNS
CONSULTING ENGINEER

DRAWINGS BY
J. FLOYD YEWELL

monly the first thought of laymen inexperienced in city planning. No difficulties or limitations are imposed on the designer who has unlimited area in which to plan a civic centre and the symmetrical products of ingenuity create an illusion of achievement. This procedure is equivalent to designing a new city rather than improving and modernizing an existing community. The hazards of anticipation are involved.

In the development of the Normal School site admittedly only five acres are provided but the presence of existing streets, sewers and transportation and the fixed character of Jamaica warrants the consideration given this site *if no expenditure is to be made for land*. In any case too much land presents its own problems, for certainly a group of public buildings is not to be isolated amidst a vast extent of open country. If it be submitted that such excess land constitutes a reserve for future buildings to complete the civic centre then admittedly the projected plan involving excess land is incomplete, for a civic centre should include all public buildings required for present and future needs.

Buildings Indicated:

All buildings on the Normal School site as designed for a civic centre face Highland Avenue and represent four facades.

The Borough Hall is placed on the most elevated portion of the site. The building consists of a central portion flanked by two wings. The total ground space required is 50,000 square feet and with six stories shown in the perspective view of the Civic Centre this provides 300,000 square feet of floor space, for Borough and City offices.

The County Office Building is placed in the southwest corner of the site and covers a ground area of 21,600 square feet. With six stories this provides 129,600 square feet of floor space for county offices.

The Courts Building is placed symmetrically with the axes of the other buildings and covers a ground space equal to the County Building. A floor space equal to 129,600 square feet is provided by the six stories employed to secure liberal accommodations for the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court Library, Justice's Chambers, consultation rooms for attorneys and litigants, and like accommodations for the Lower Courts.

The central heating plant is located in the northwest corner most remote from Highland Avenue and from Parsons Boulevard.

The practical advantages of the grouping and individual locations, as for instance the placing of the Courts Building on the quiet and withdrawn section, will be apparent on consideration of the plan view on opposite page.

Soil Bearing and Foundations:

The old Normal School occupies the site at present. This is a large brick building. Excavation to grade through the natural deposit remaining on the eastern boundary of the plot discloses a sandy soil. No foundation problems are indicated. The structural condition of the Normal School and the presence of the large structure occupied by the

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

Jamaica Jewish Centre close by confirm this conclusion. The site is located on the ridge running through this section of Long Island east and west.

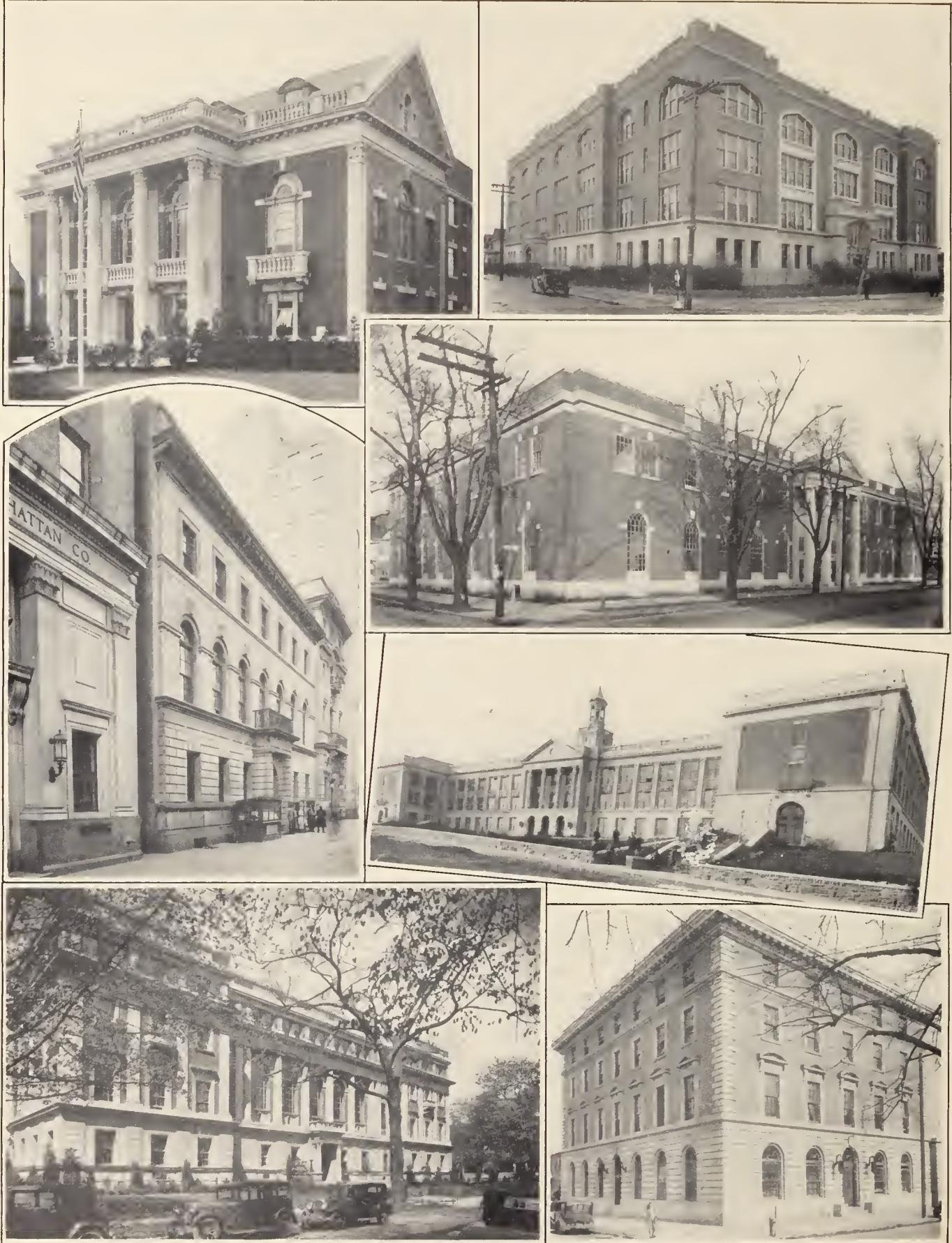
Local Convenience of Location:

The following distances from the Normal school site to prominent features in the community of Jamaica itself indicate its central location *within* the accessible centre of the borough:

To Hillside Ave. Site	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile East
To L. I. R. R. Main Station	$\frac{3}{4}$ mile
To Union Hall Station	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Jamaica Bus Terminal	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Subway Station	100 feet
To Grand Central Parkway	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
(To Nassau County and route to Kings, Manhattan and Bronx)	
To Queens Boulevard	$1\frac{1}{4}$ miles
To Merrick Road	$2\frac{1}{5}$ mile
To Jamaica Avenue	$1\frac{1}{5}$ mile
To Police Headquarters	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Fire Headquarters	$\frac{1}{4}$ mile
To Queens General Hospital	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To General Post Office	$\frac{1}{4}$ mile
To N. Y. State Armory	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Jamaica High School	$\frac{1}{4}$ mile
To Old Town Hall	$1\frac{1}{5}$ mile
To Central Library	$1\frac{1}{5}$ mile
To Children's Court	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile
To Passionist Monastery	$\frac{3}{4}$ mile
To Banks, Trust Companies, Title Companies, Office Buildings, Theatres, Stores etc. comprising centre of Jamaica business section (164th Street and Jamaica Av.)	$2\frac{1}{5}$ mile

Financial Estimate Complete Project:

Land	no cost
Grading and Paving new streets.....	none
Sewers	no cost
Water	no cost
Utilities	no cost
Transportation	no cost
Landscape	nominal cost
Paving inner roadway .. 100 x 500 @ \$3. yd.	\$ 16,666
Buildings—Borough Hall	\$3,000,000
County Building	1,000,000
Courts Building	1,000,000
Miscellaneous . . . Retaining Wall east—Improving condition of right of way north.	
Future charge—Paving right of way—50 x 600 @ \$3. yd. \$10,000	
Total.....	\$5,026,000



*Children's Court, Register's Office, Queensboro Public Library; P. S. 95,
Federal Building, Jamaica High School, Police Headquarters.*



J A M A I C A

by

ARTHUR W. RENANDER

*Chairman Committee on Procedure
Jamaica Civic Centre Committee*

The Borough of Queens, as an administrative division of the City of New York, is contiguous with the *County of Queens*, an administrative division of the State of New York. The office of the County Clerk and of the County Register, the Surrogate and the Public Administrator of the County from the beginning have been located in Jamaica. This defines Jamaica as the seat of the County government.

Unfortunately for the efficiency and convenience of the Borough of Queens, the Borough Hall in which the offices of the Borough President are located is presently situated in Long Island City, ten miles distant from Jamaica. This inconsistency probably results from concessions to local controversies in the long distant past when a lesser population and few transit facilities discouraged foresighted planning for the borough. With the continued development of industrial plants and railroad terminals in Long Island City the impropriety of maintaining the borough government there has become increasingly evident. As a matter of fact, the borough offices in Long Island City today occupy a converted loft building.

While Long Island City developed as an industrial area, Jamaica expanded its business and residential character with each new office building or retail edifice and with added apartments and homes. A generous disposition of churches, hospitals and modern public buildings emphasizes this characteristic growth of a civic centre environment.

Removal of the public offices from Long Island City is inevitable in any plan. The effect of this on the fixed character of Long Island City will be negligible because of the community's industrial identity. On the contrary, removal of the public buildings from Jamaica would so definitely constitute an assault on this area as to jeopardize its very existence. This strong statement will be fully substantiated by a mere recitation of incontrovertible facts.

No other community in the Borough of Queens is identified with the location of existing public offices and, therefore, need not be considered in this phase of the discussion.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

As presently located, the public of Queens is served by the following disposition of the Courts and of city, county and borough offices.

In Jamaica

- (R) The County Surrogate's Court
- (R) The Supreme Court, Special Term
- (O) Special Sessions Court, Part 3
- (O) Municipal Court, 4th District
- (N) Domestic Relations Court
- (N) Children's Court
- (O) Magistrate's Court, 4th District

In Long Island City

- (O) The Supreme Court, Trial Term
- (O) The Supreme Court Library
- (R) The City Court
- (R) The County Court
- (O) Probation Department
- (R) Municipal Court, 1st District
- (O) Magistrate's Court, 1st District

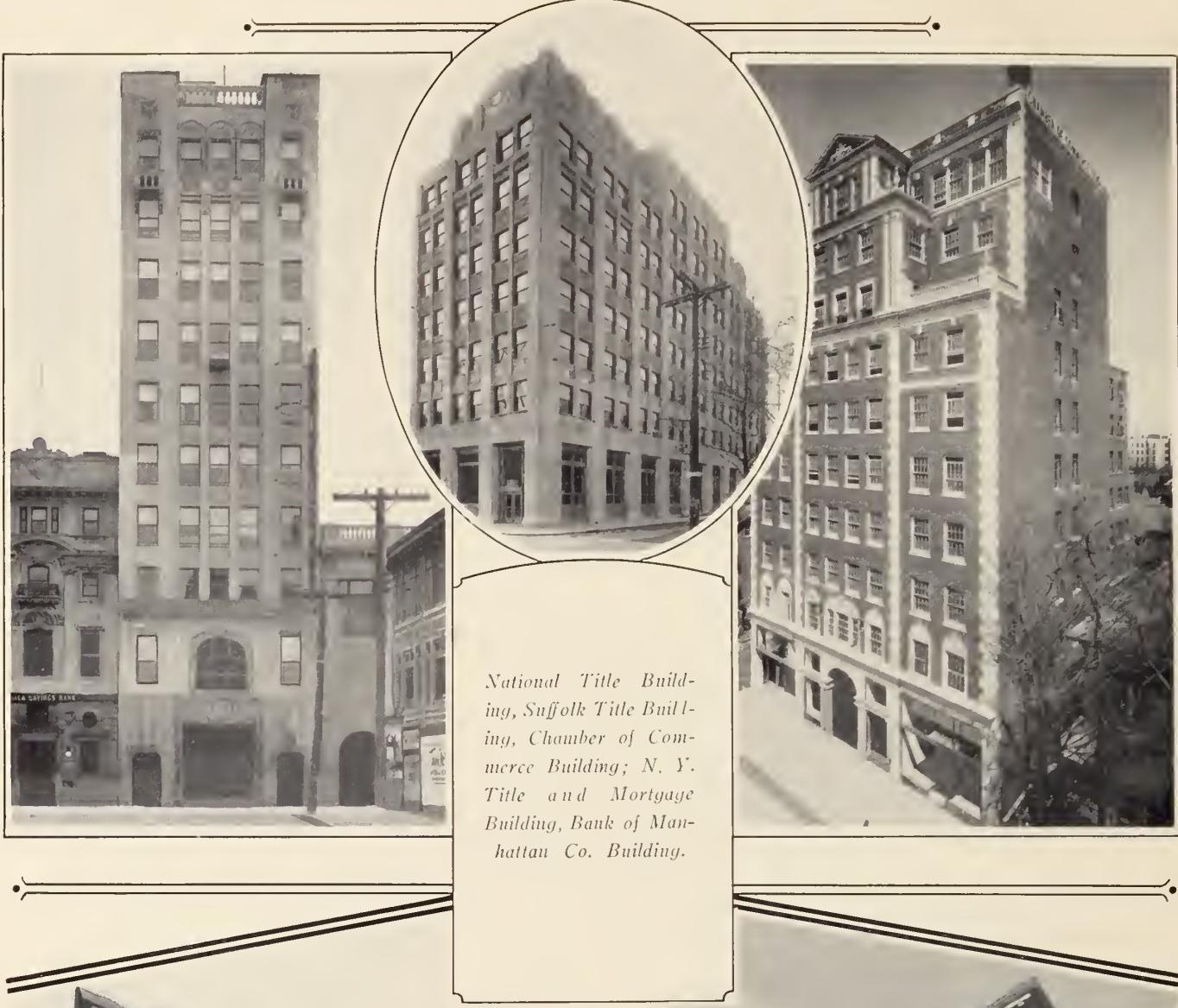
-
- (R) The County Clerk's Offices
 - (O) The County Register's Offices
 - (R) The Public Administrator's Offices
-

- (O) The District Attorney's Offices
- (O) The County Sheriff's Offices

- (R) The Chief Medical Examiner's Offices
- (R) Offices of Dept. of Public Welfare
- (R) Offices of Department of Health
- (R) Offices of the Corporation Counsel, Law Department, Legal Division
- (R) Bureau of Street Openings
- (R) Board of Elections Offices
- R) Topographical Bureau Office of the Dept. of Taxes and Assessments
- (R) Department of Sanitation Offices
- (R) Engineering Construction Bureau
- (R) Bureau of Sewers, Maintenance Office
- (N) Police Headquarters of Queens
- (N) 104th Field Artillery Armory
- (N) Queensboro General Hospital
- (N) Headquarters, Society Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- (N) S. P. C. C. Shelter House
- (O) Employment Certification Office, Board of Education
- (N) Fire Department Headquarters

- (R) The Borough President's Offices
- (R) Bureau of Highways Offices
- (R) Bureau of Sewers Offices
- (R) Bureau of Public Buildings and Offices
- (R) Topographical Bureau
- (O) Commissioner of Jurors' Offices
- (O) Offices of the City Clerk
- (R) Dept. of Water Gas & Electricity Offices
- (R) Dept. of Taxes & Assessments Offices
(Assessments & Arrears)
(Taxes & Assessments)
(City Collections)
- (R) Building Dept. Offices
- (R) Bureau of Weights & Measures Offices
- (R) Offices of Tenement House Dept.
- (R) Offices, Water Supply Board— Catskill Aqueduct
- (O) The City Prison
- (O) Supply Stores of Board of Education

(In the foregoing listing "R" signifies rented quarters; "O" signifies old, obsolete buildings; "N" signifies new, modern buildings.)



It will be noted that in each instance where a new building has been erected for public use the location has been in Jamaica. This is typical of the very definite trend toward Jamaica as the established civic centre of the Borough of Queens. Obviously these new buildings cannot be removed to any other civic centre site.

* * * * *

The existing public offices in Jamaica have established a nucleus about which an extensive disposition of office buildings has grown to meet the demands of general business. Examination of varied activities covering the entire Borough of Queens discloses of all business sufficiently established to justify telephone installation the following:

Of 397 attorneys-at-law, 156 have offices in Jamaica.
Of 3 real estate licensed auctioneers, 2 are in Jamaica.
Of 33 architects, 9 are in Jamaica office buildings.
Of 8 fire insurance adjusters, 7 are in Jamaica offices.
Of 11 title and mortgage companies, the 9 largest are in Jamaica buildings, i. e.,

Greater New York-Suffolk Title & Guarantee Co.

Guarantee Title & Mortgage Co.

Home Title Guarantee Company

Lawyers' Title Corporation

Long Island Title Guarantee Co.

New York Title & Mortgage Company

State Title and Mortgage Company

Title Guarantee and Trust Company

Lawyers Mortgage Company

Queens County Cooperative Savings & Loan Association

Seven banks are located in Jamaica, including the executive offices of the Bank of Manhattan, with twenty Queens branches; the Corn Exchange Bank, Jamaica National Bank (two banks in Jamaica), the National City Bank, Jamaica Savings Bank, Queensboro Savings Bank and the Savings Bank of Central Queens.

Of three trust companies, two are established in Jamaica, the Brooklyn Trust Company and Title Guarantee and Trust Company.

The Long Island Real Estate Board maintains its executive offices in Jamaica.

No other community in the Borough of Queens presents this characteristic development of a business aspect. Certified public accountants, abstract companies and innumerable diversifications of office business activity might be cited.

Complementing the office buildings, a great development of retail business building is located in Jamaica. In every instance these represent modern, well equipped stores. A few examples would include:

- Gertz—department store
- Burden—department store
- Wallach Brothers—clothiers
- B. & B. Company—clothiers
- Montgomery Ward—general retail department store
- Sears, Roebuck and Company
- Ludwig Baumann—furniture store
- Spear & Co.—furniture store

Queens County's largest Y. M. C. A. is located in Jamaica. It is known as the Central Queens Branch. Here also is found the Queens Borough Tuberculosis and Health Association, American Red Cross Central Queens Chapter. The Queens Y. W. C. A. is located in Jamaica. Churches of all denominations, including the great buildings of the Passionist Monastery, the new City owned hospital for Queens County, the Jamaica Hospital and the Mary Immaculate Hospital, are situated in Jamaica, as well as the Boro Hospital for Communicable Diseases. All of these buildings further define the civic centre character of this area.

Extending about this wide business area, an existing residential area of apartment houses and private homes completes a perfect location for the proposed Civic Centre of the Borough of Queens.

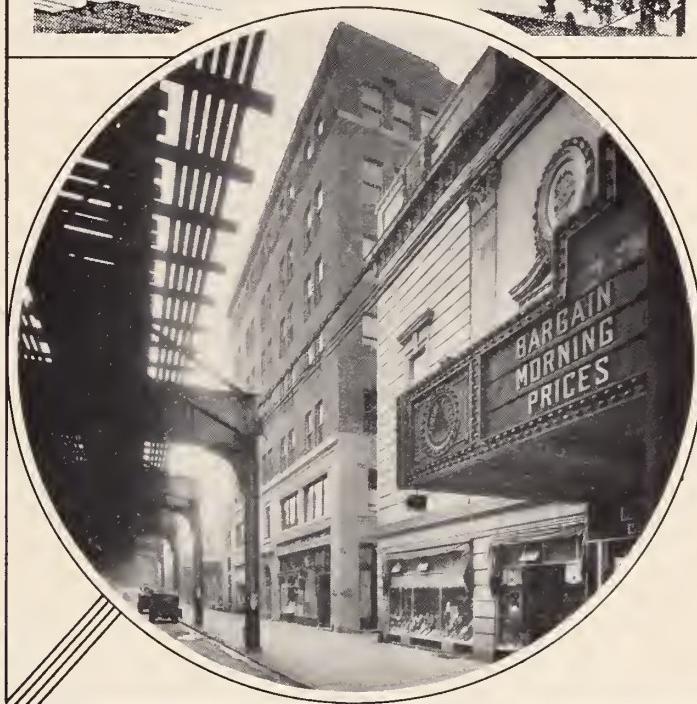
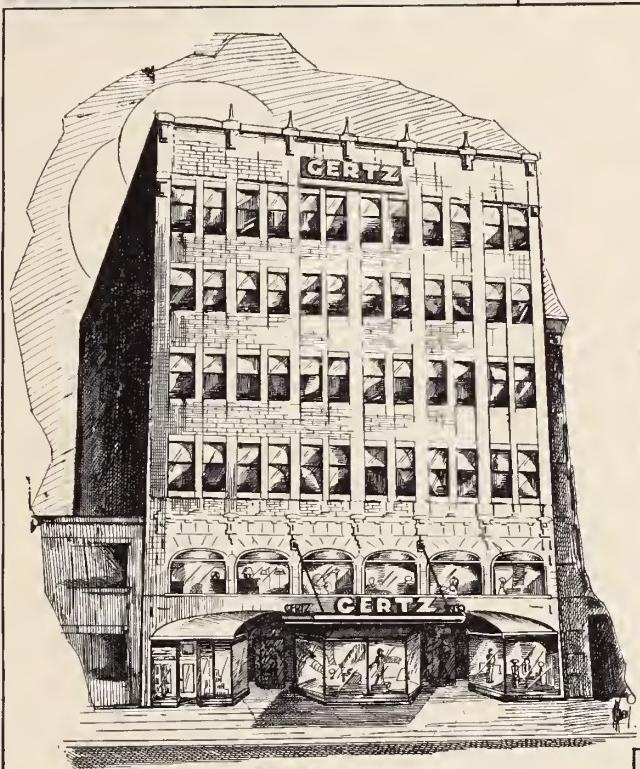
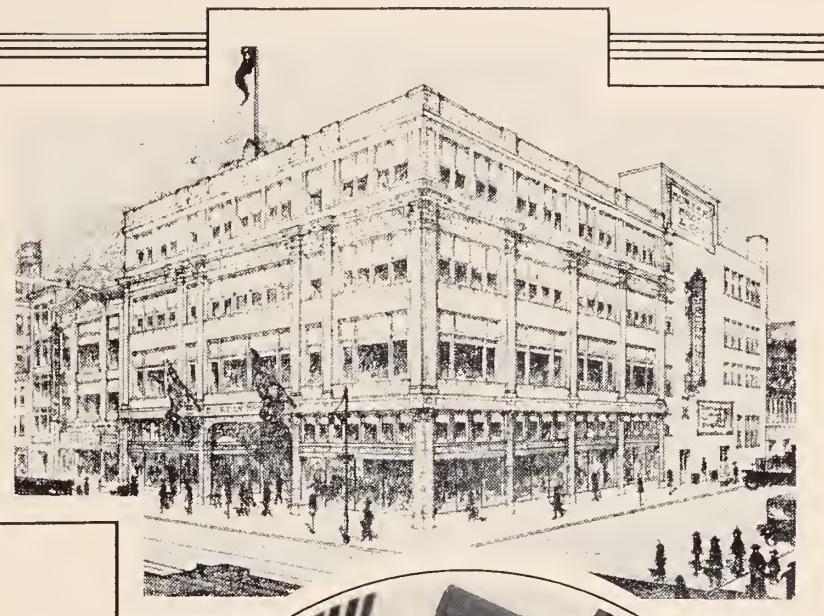
Photographic illustrations of typical buildings selected at random will confirm these statements. These do not include all available buildings by any means, but are merely examples indicating the character of buildings throughout the Jamaica area.

Jamaica is the gateway to New York City for the large population residing on Long Island. All important highways lead to Jamaica, and its accessibility is illustrated by the transportation map illustrated on page four. Rapid transit to all parts of the City of New York is available through the B. M. T. elevated system, with a terminus at 168th Street, Jamaica, and the new subway from Manhattan to a terminus in Jamaica at Hillside Avenue and 178th Street. Four surface lines serve Jamaica.

Thus the most remote sections are provided with these forms of transportation from all eastern Long Island and from Brooklyn and Pennsylvania Station. Augment-



Hotel Whitman, L. I. R. R. Main Station, Mary Immaculate Hospital; Children's Shelter, Jamaica Jewish Center, Central Queens Y. M. C. A., Jamaica Hospital.



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ing the service above mentioned there are twenty-two bus lines connecting all parts of the Borough of Queens with Jamaica. With the pending systemization of bus service and probable transfer privileges, this network will be further effective.

The main station of the Long Island Railroad on Long Island is also situated in Jamaica. This station is fourth in the United States in scheduled passenger trains on a trunk line railroad. The Long Island Railroad has two other stations in Jamaica, Union Hall Street station and Hillside station.

The importance of inexpensive transportation to the people of Queens who have business with the various public offices should not be overlooked. Most of the people in Queens Borough can travel from their homes to Jamaica on transportation provided for them through trolleys, elevated lines, surface or bus lines, at a five cent fare.

The following are some of the well established bus and transit system lines serving Jamaica:

- The Bee Line, Inc.
- Jamaica Buses, Inc.
- Queens Bus Line, Inc.
- S. & C. Bus Corporation
- Green Bus Lines, Inc.
- Transit Coach Company
- North Shore Bus Company
- Bilow Bus Lines, Inc.
- Briarwood Bus Company
- Flushing Heights Bus Corporation
- Midland Coach Company
- Manhattan & Queens Street Railway
- N. Y. and Queens County Street Railway
- Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit Corporation
- Brooklyn Elevated Line.

Queens County has developed a borough center in Central Queens that has all the characteristics of a metropolis. Such communities as Astoria, Corona, Jackson Heights, are residential communities with neighborhood stores and neighborhood business enterprises. Jamaica is more than a neighborhood center. It is a metropolitan center. The stores and the business establishments of Jamaica derive only a small part of their business from the residential community of Jamaica itself. Most of their business comes from the large residential communities that surround Jamaica. Briefly,

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUEENS CIVIC CENTRE

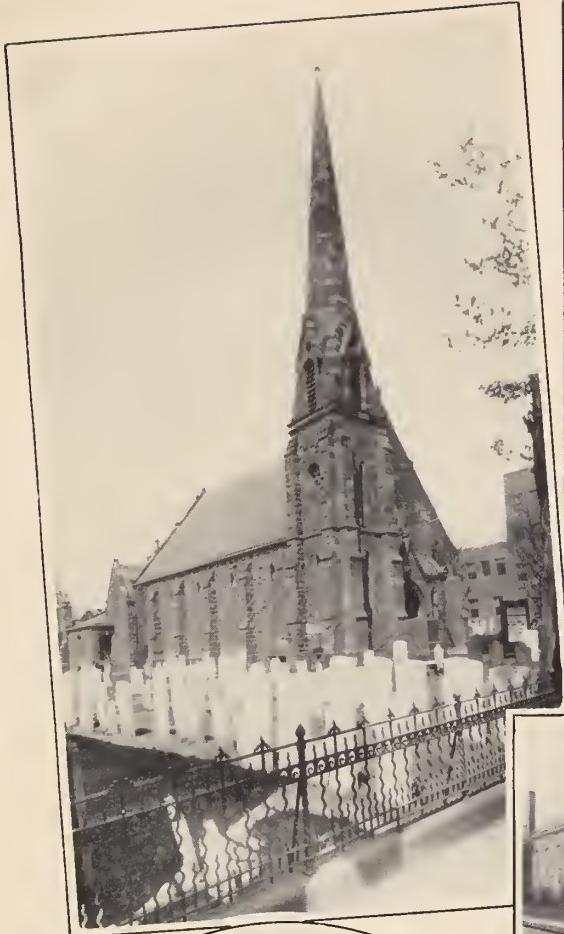
Jamaica has the same relation to Central Queens that Manhattan has to the whole City of New York. Both are centers from which greater areas radiate. An inquiry at any one of the large business establishments on Jamaica Avenue would reveal that their trading area embraces a population of at least 600,000, all of whom are served by the bus, trolley, subway and railroad systems that radiate from Jamaica. The population of this area includes the following:

Jamaica	97,600
Richmond Hill and Kew Gardens.....	56,500
Woodhaven and Ozone Park.....	154,800
Hollis, Queens Village and Bellaire.....	58,600
Springfield, St. Albans and Rosedale	68,000
Forest Hills	20,800
Glendale and Middle Village	35,000

The figures are from the U. S. Government Census of 1930.

On the basis of demonstrable facts and without prejudice, it is clearly evident that Jamaica alone offers those factors of established population, transit facilities, definite trends of development, borough central location, elements of desirable environment and development and existing streets and sewers which are identified with a civic centre location and which permit its most economical development and most efficient use.





*Grace Episcopal Church,
First Presbyterian Church, Church of the
Immaculate Conception and Passionist Monas-
tery; Grove Apartments, Hillcrest Apartments,
Hampton Towers; First
Baptist Church*

Finis

In closing this report I feel impelled to express my belief in the sincerity of all those who became interested in any phase of this subject. It is my confident opinion that a full realization of the merits of the Jamaica location as disclosed in either of the two designs will win eventual borough wide approval, attesting the reasonableness and unity for the common good of all concerned.

To the Borough President, with whose specific recommendations of a location I have consistently differed, must be given credit for upholding the principle of a Civic Centre for Queens when its advantages were questioned. To the Mayor of the City of New York must be accorded credit for settling the question of whether or not a civic centre is necessary in Queens by his prompt and vigorous affirmative decision. Finally, recognition must be accorded the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate for his impartial report inevitably sustaining the claims of Jamaica.

With these acknowledgments it is to be hoped the Board of Estimate will give careful study to this final report with a view to such early action as will result in prompt construction of the Civic Centre of the Borough of Queens.

GEORGE H. BRUNS.



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